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## Blood and Cities

by [TheSoundOfThunderstorms](#)

### Summary

Fareeha wants to get married. Ana wants to play matchmaker. There's something going on with the cities.

### Notes

In case you haven't read the tags, countries are now cities for alternate dimension reasons. I'm still figuring how advanced the technology is. It's somewhere along the line of 'they have cars and guns but they are old timey and work different but they don't have phones and stuff so they communicate by letter?' There's tech but nothing too advanced. Wouldn't want them going without a toilet you know?

Anyway, enjoy!

# One

For the past couple of minutes, Fareeha was contemplating how to broach the subject on her mind with her mother. She settled for blurting something out.

“I think I’m ready.”

The break in the calm silence was a bit startling.

Ana squinted her eye as she attempted to decipher her daughter’s cryptic message. She looked at Fareeha to try to get a clue. The nervous look on her face gave her what she was looking for. When she figured it out, the look of realization showed on Ana’s face. “You know you don’t have to,” she said.

They were sitting at a stone table at the edge of the garden. Sounds of rushing water from the nearby river could be heard. The surrounding sycamore trees shielded the two women from the harsh sun as they drank their tea.

“I want to.” Picking up her cup, Fareeha took a sip. “I feel like it’s the right time.”

Ana silently put her drink on the warm stone and continued to study her daughter. They have talked about this before but Fareeha had always said she wasn’t ready. After taking in Hana and naming her the next successor, Fareeha had seemed content enough as it was. Hearing that her daughter now thought differently was a bit surprising.

“You giving me a granddaughter has made me happy enough. If this is about pleasing me- “

“I have been thinking about this for some time,” Fareeha cut her off. Staring at the rippling water in the distance she continued, “I made up my mind a while ago.”

“Do you have someone in mind?”

Cheeks reddening, she looked down into her cup. “I am not particularly close with anyone I know.”

Ana smiled. “Well, now that you told me you want to get *married*, I do happen to have someone in mind.” Picking up her cup, she took a sip. “If this is what you want, I’ll send her a letter tonight.”

Looking at her mother for a moment, realization dawned on her. “You’ve had this planned already, didn’t you?”

Ana gave a light shrug. “I will admit that I have made plans a while ago but the person I have in mind doesn’t know about them.” Ana’s smile widened. “Besides, there’s no guarantee that she’ll say yes. I’ve heard that she has been receiving many offers recently. She may not like what you have to offer.”

The cup of tea suddenly seemed very interesting as Fareeha spoke. “Don’t forget that I may not be partial to her either.”

Ana gave a look that doubted what her daughter just said. Seeing the expression on her mother’s face, Fareeha’s cheeks grew more red as she returned her gaze to her tea. “If my offer is unappealing to her, I know I’ll eventually find someone.” Her words took on a humorous tone as she continued. “Besides, I have Hana to keep me company should I find myself dying alone.”

Standing up from the table, Ana picked up her now empty cup and walked over to place her free hand on her daughter's shoulder. "She's a nice woman, I have known her for a while now. We've caught up quite well over the past two years. I'm sure she will agree to at least meet you. But you are right. If things do not work out, there is always someone willing to marry an Amari."

As Ana walked away, her daughter made a frustrated noise that made the older woman laugh.

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It took her a few minutes to walk to the garden entryway but when Ana arrived she looked up to see Hana throwing pieces of bread to the birds from the second story balcony. The birds on the ground competed for the prized food. Some would get brave and fly up to the balcony. The girl would shoo the brave birds away and say that they "needed to follow the rules." Hana seemed to notice her grandmother's arrival and promptly shoved the whole pile of bread she had from the stone railing to the eagerly awaiting birds below.

"Wait right there old lady." The spry girl expertly climbed her way down to the bottom of the garden entryway in a rush. Taking two seconds to catch her breath, Hana pointed at Ana's face. "You still owe me a rematch. I've been practicing."

"Maybe some other time Hana." Ana started to walk into the Amari home and the younger girl followed. "I have a letter I need to write. I will be leaving in the morning so I need to pack some belongings and rest."

This seemed to peak Hana's interest. "Why are you leaving?"

The glimmer in Ana's remaining eye spoke volumes. "Your mama wants to get married."

"What?" Hana's eyeballs threatened to pop out of her head. "So you're telling me that my mama wants to get married?" Her eyes seemed to get impossibly wider. "And that means that I'll get to have two mamas!" She started to walk excitedly on the balls of her feet.

Ana smiled at the girl's enthusiasm. "Fareeha told me she thought about it for a while now."

They arrived at the kitchen where Ana dropped off her empty cup. Hana picked up a bowl of figs and started to eat one on their way out of the kitchen. "So wait, are you trying to arrange something for her or something?" Trying to scarf down another fig she stopped mid-chew. "Is the lady nice? I don't need a mean second mama." Her last sentence was muffled by the fruit still in her mouth. They turned another corner and started to head towards Ana's room at the end of the hall.

"Swallow your food before speaking little rabbit."

Unfazed by the comment, Hana continued to eat while she talked. "What if it doesn't work out?"

"I have a good feeling about this one," said Ana.

Nearing the room, Hana picked up her pace so that she would get into the room first. She made a mad dash for the bed, spilling some of the fruit onto the sheets when she jumped on it. Abandoning the bowl at the foot of the bed, Hana stretched out until she took up the majority of it. She settled for picking out the strewn about figs from the covers and eating the fruit as she found them.

Ana got comfortable in the chair at her desk. Wasting no time, she started to draft a letter to the woman in mind. The room was quiet save for the sounds of her granddaughter biting into her

favorite fruit. She managed to write most of the letter when Hana broke the silence.

“So what’s her name?”

Ana stopped writing. “Her name is Angela.” She turned in her chair to face Hana. The girl was now laying on the edge of the bed that faced the chair, barely taking up any room. “I knew her parents before they died in the war. I’ve kept an eye on her ever since. I was actually going to visit her soon but Fareeha speeded my plans up.” She turned back in her chair. “It would be nice to have her as part of the family.”

“It’s a pretty name.”

Hana shifted over to her other side and didn’t say anything after that.

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Hours had passed since Ana wrote the letter. After sealing it, she gave it to one of the messengers and sent him on his way. Having already packed, she settled for gazing out the window from her spot on the other side of the bed. Her granddaughter fell asleep shortly after their talk. Ana had simply shifted Hana under the covers and let the girl rest. She’d pester her about the fig mess some other time.

She thought about Angela. Her family was renowned for their knowledge in medicine. She remembered seeing a young Angela running around the neighboring Wilhelm military compound bandaging up soldiers while her parents were in the next room over performing lifesaving surgical procedures.

The girl had always looked up to her parents and unsurprisingly wanted to be a doctor too. She remembered the time when the Ziegler’s started to mentor their daughter in the more advanced medical practices. They took out time every day to teach Angela everything they knew and would have her practice her technique over and over again. Seeing Angela stitching up a banana with quick, steady hands and the most serious expression etched on her face was a memory Ana could never forget.

She remembered the stunned look on the girl’s face when they invited her to observe their surgeries, her eyes would stay focused as they methodically explained every step along the way. Angela would spend hours studying thick medical texts and often times Ana would come by to find the girl passed out on an open book. Within six years she became a competent doctor in her own right and even found ways to improve her parents’ methods. The girl was a prodigy.

During missions in the war, Ana would listen as the Ziegler’s would animatedly talk about Angela in the medical tent. It was always a welcome distraction to focus on rather than the pain and the sea of bodies that came with the war. The pride in their voices made her think of her own Fareeha. She had a fierce determination to be a soldier like her mother.

The thought of her daughter lying dead, alone, and forgotten on the battlefield would make Ana’s veins go cold. Ever since she was fifteen, every time Fareeha talked about becoming a soldier, Ana would always try to convince her otherwise. A lot of arguments happened that way and the fighting dragged on for three years. It caused a rift between them. Looking back on those days, Ana had regrets because now she had nothing but pride for her daughter.

Fareeha was meant to be a soldier. After the incident that presumed her dead, Ana went into hiding for ten years. In that time, her daughter took her mother’s place as the new head of the city and simultaneously enlisted in the military. She learned that Fareeha quickly rose through the ranks and fought fiercely in the war. Her time in the military lasted only four years. Once the

fighting was over, Egypt needed a leader more than it needed a soldier. Six years after the war ended Ana returned home to find that her daughter, a retired captain, had fully devoted her time to being the head of the city and mother to a war-torn orphan.

The sound of her door opening brought Ana out of her thoughts.

“I was wondering where she went.” Fareeha stepped through the doorway and pulled up a chair next to her sleeping daughter. Hana had shifted from her side to her back, covering half of her face with hair. “Knowing this one, she probably bugged you for a rematch in chess. She does hate to lose.”

Ana let out a small chuckle in response. “She did.”

Fareeha reach out and tucked away the hair that obstructed her daughter’s face. The action cause Hana to raise a balled fist in an unconscious attempt to push away the offending hand. Her fist uncurled and a small fig rolled down from her forehead into her hair.

Pulling out the piece of fruit, Fareeha noticed that her mother’s bed was covered in figs, a bowl of them teetering at the foot of the bed. “Always so messy,” she said. She grabbed the bowl before it fell off the bed and started to fill it with the figs that littered Ana’s sheets. Once all the fruit were back in the bowl, she placed the bowl on the nearby desk and sat back down in the chair.

“So are you really going through with this?” Fareeha asked.

“I’ve already sent the letter. It will take me about three days to get there. You should be excited to meet her. She’s a doctor you know.” Ana’s eye took on a sparkle. “And her eyes are that shade of blue you like so much.” She winked and laughed as her daughter’s face got impossibly red.

Ana watched as Fareeha buried her face in her hands in an attempt to hide her embarrassment. She stayed in the position until she calmed down.

“Don’t you have any questions about this mystery woman I’m trying to set you up with?”

Fareeha didn’t answer.

“Hana had questions.”

Sighing, Fareeha pulled her hands away and peered back down at Hana. Looking like she decided on something, she stood up and put the chair back at the desk. Lifting the covers, she wrapped her arms underneath Hana’s knees and shoulders, gently lifting the girl up so as not to wake her. “I’ll take her to her own bed so you can sleep. Tonight might be the night were she decides to kick your shins out. I’ve woken up with bruised legs enough times to know not to tempt fate.” When she walked passed the doorway, Fareeha turned around. “I’m sure the mystery woman is lovely. Goodnight and have safe travels.”

After Fareeha closed the door, Ana focused on the sound of her daughter’s retreating footsteps until she could no longer hear them. Glad to not have to pick up the fig mess herself, Ana lifted the covers over herself and went to bed. It would do no good to keep thinking about the past.

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It was the middle of the night when Angela returned from the hospital. She went into her study to copy her research notes for the day when she noticed the stack of letters on her desk. Putting the task to the side, she went through the letters one by one. Most of them were marriage propositions, she put those in a drawer with her stash of identical politely worded refusals. There were two letters requesting a research position at the hospital. She placed them on another pile of similar

requests to review later.

The letter that caught her eye was the blue enveloped that had the Amari seal on it. Her eyes lit up at the sight and she quickly went to open it. She always loved it when Ana wrote her.

*I'll be coming to see you.*

*I know it has only been a couple of months since I last saw you but something just came up that I want to talk to you about. I feel it most appropriate to discuss it in person rather than over correspondence.*

*I also want you to think about the possibility of visiting my city. I know you haven't left Switzerland since your parents but I would very much like you to meet my family. I just know that they'll love you.*

*As always, I know you are probably busy at that research hospital of yours but please remember to eat something every now and then. You always seem to forget about that.*

*With love,  
Ana*

The letter wasn't necessarily long but it left Angela with plenty to think about. After her parents died, Angela came back home and hadn't stepped foot outside of Switzerland for the past twelve years. It was comforting to take care of the home her family watched over. In that way, she felt like she was honoring her parents. For five years after coming back home for good, Angela did find herself lonely on most days. Some acquaintances from her past would come to see her every now and again but when they left the feeling of loneliness would always come back.

She buried that feeling the only way she knew how: diving headfirst into her research.

After founding her research hospital, she took in people from across the world to teach them her techniques and foster an environment that sought the advancement of medicine. Years of taking care of patients, training top notch surgeons, and researching new concepts served to patch up her longing for meaningful companionship.

That's not to say she did not have her fun with the occasional man or woman that caught her eye. It was only when they wanted more than she was willing to offer that she found herself reverting to her learned habit of closing people off. It wasn't until two years ago that Angela found herself opening up again. She received a letter from Ana. The words on the page sent her head reeling because here was a ghost, someone she thought to have died during the war, writing to say that they were going to visit.

Angela was still in disbelief when Ana in the flesh showed up to her home. As soon as Ana got close enough, Angela couldn't hold herself together anymore and clung desperately to her old friend as the tears clouded her vision. Ana just held her tighter and stayed that way until she was done crying. The crying had felt good and being able to talk to a dear friend felt even better. That day they talked until the sun went down.

In the two years since Ana's return, they exchanged many letters and the older woman would come to visit her every few months. Angela never visited Ana and her family but the woman always said she understood every time Angela expressed her guilt over it. Now that an invitation was brought up she was considering it. She no longer felt the need to stay within the city. Just last week she stepped over the city boundary to greet a caravan of performers coming in from one of the neutral roads. She felt that if she wanted to, she would be okay with leaving Switzerland for a while. With the recent influx of marriage proposals and the constant research, she could use an

escape from it all.

Her gaze flicked down to the locked box on her desk. Pulling out the key, she unlocked the box and took out the note that sat on the bottom. It only had two sentences but the words were still as unnerving as the first time she read them. *'We will cut out the weak. A city is only as strong as its blood.'*

Angela receive the disturbing note nearly a week ago and she suspected that it may have something to do with all the marriage proposals she's been receiving. Ana's invitation to her home seemed more appealing the more she thought about it.

There was also the matter of why Ana wanted to visit. Usually she would make a trip to Switzerland just to see how Angela was doing and to talk non-stop about Fareeha and Hana. With the amount of times Ana talked about them, Angela felt like she knew them already. Knowing that this was not just the usual visit, Angela started to worry. Did something happen? Was Ana in trouble?

She spent some time wracking her brain for anything that Ana could possibly want to talk about but her thoughts always came to the same conclusion. She'll have to wait and see. Knowing Ana, she'll be here by tomorrow afternoon. Coincidentally during tea time. They'll talk about whatever it is then.

Taking time to stretch her arms and push her bangs back, Angela folded the letter back into the envelope and put it with all the other letters from Ana. Reaching for her research notes, she flipped to the beginning of the day's entry and started to rewrite them in much neater writing on the paper she always had on her desk.

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Three days after sending the letter, Ana finally arrived at the city limits of Switzerland. Checking her pocket watch, she smiled when she saw that she would make it in time for tea time. She always did.

Parking her small car on Zeigler property, Ana stepped out and started to walk towards Angela's home. Passing the greenhouse, she noticed that all the plants inside were still dead. "Still never found the time I suppose," Ana muttered to herself.

As she approached the home, Ana happened to peer into the side garden to find Angela sitting at one of the tables. There was a cup in the woman's hand and a teapot at the center of the table. Beside the teapot sat a milk dish and a small, glass bowl filled with sugar cubes. She noticed the cup sitting opposite of Angela, in front of the empty chair.

The woman was deep in thought when Ana spoke.

"It seems I don't have to make the tea this time."

Shooting up one of her hands to clutch at her chest, Angela looked up at Ana with a frightened look on her face. "Ana! You always manage to sneak up on me."

"You seem to forget I was a sniper. I'm supposed to be sneaky."

Angela just smiled as she put her cup down. Getting up, she walked over to the older woman and gave her a hug. "Come sit. The tea was just made so it should be hot."

Ana accepted the invitation and took the unoccupied seat. Her hands automatically knew what to do as they reached for the teapot. After pouring a satisfactory amount of tea, Ana plucked out

three sugar cubes from the bowl stirred them into her tea. Grabbing the milk dish, she poured in a bit of the liquid into her tea and finally looked up to see Angela leaning on her hand and looking at her with a small smile.

“What are you thinking about?”

Angela hummed and shifted her hands to fit around her own cup. “It’s just that you always make your tea like that. With the world changing around me, it’s a small comfort to know that Ana Amari still makes her tea the same.”

“That’s something that will never change. In my old age, I’ve grown stubborn.”

Angela chuckled at that. “That’s to say that you weren’t stubborn to begin with.”

Ana gave a shrug in response and they both began drinking their tea as the comfortable familiarity settled over them.

Having finished her tea first, Angela placed her cup down and gave Ana a serious look. “You said in your letter that you needed to discuss something with me in person. It must be very important.” She waited for Ana to respond.

Ana’s calm face gave nothing away as she finished the last of her tea. “It’s not far off from the offers you’ve been receiving lately,” she said.

Angela’s face began to heat up and her cheeks were slowly turning red as she seemingly put two and two together. “Oh Ana. I-I am uh...flattered.” The embarrassment started to make her voice shake. “Don’t you think that you are um... You’re a bit too...” She had a hard time finding the right words to let her dear friend down gently.

Ana immediately caught on and was grateful that she was no longer drinking tea. “No, no no,” she half-laughed. “I wasn’t referring to myself.”

At that Angela seemed to calm down a bit.

“Three days ago Fareeha told me that she wanted to get married. Can you believe that Angela? I was so surprised when I first heard her. And then I immediately thought of you. It would make an old woman so happy to have you as part of the family.”

“So what you are telling me is that you want me to marry your daughter, correct?” Ana nodded at that. Angela suddenly appeared very flustered again. “Don’t you think that-that she already has someone in mind?”

“While my daughter does have many admirers, none of them are you.” Ana shrugged. “Besides, Fareeha told me she wasn’t close with anyone.”

The red in Angela’s face wouldn’t let up. “Ana, I haven’t even met her.” Her face morphed into an expression of realization. “But that would be why you wanted me to visit.”

Ana lifted her hands in mock surrender. “You caught me.” Putting them back down she continued. “Won’t you at least consider meeting her?” To drive the point home, Ana started to list off her daughter’s qualities. “She has a soldier’s loyalty and a fierce devotion to the ones she loves. She’s very strong and I have no doubt that she would keep you safe. She has a heart of gold you know. Always saying something about ‘protecting the innocent’.” Almost done with her list, Ana added one last tidbit. “She also has those Amari good looks.”

At this point Angela couldn’t even form words anymore. She settled for gaping at Ana in her

embarrassment.

Ana reached across the table and took one of Angela's hands in her own. "At least think about it?"

Angela looked down to their hands and then back up to Ana. She seemed to have regained some of her self-control. She took a moment to ponder Ana's words and thought about her own situation with the pile of marriage proposals and the disturbing letter that made her uneasy. She placed her remaining hand over their clasped hands. "For you Ana... I will think about it."

Letting go of their hands, Ana stood up from her chair and closed the gap between them with a fierce hug. "Thank you. That's all that I could ask for."

"Besides the part where you basically asked if I would marry your daughter?" Angela teased.

Ana playfully swatted her back. "You know what I meant."

"Come on Ana, let's get your belongings. It will be dark soon."

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After getting her settled into one of the guest bedrooms, Ana suggested that they play a game of chess. Two hours later, Angela was regretting her decision.

Ana would usually whizz through the game like it was nothing, crushing her opponents in record time. She always called it a "quick play." This time it seemed like the older woman was deliberately dragging the game out. Worse still, Angela couldn't seem to figure out her strategy. Every move on Angela's part would make Ana smile. It was a little infuriating.

"You know Angela, the irritated look on your face mixed with all that squirming, I could have sworn I was playing with my granddaughter."

Angela seemed taken aback. "You mean to tell me that you do this with Hana? The poor girl."

Ana smirked and she suddenly picked up the pace. "Someone has to teach her patience."

Angela was grateful for the change in pace until the game ended three moves later.

"Tsk tsks Angela, it doesn't seem like you have been practicing. Hana could probably beat you. That girl is a master at games but I have to say, she's not so good at chess."

"You know I don't have time to practice. I'm only at home because I knew you were coming."

"It's not a bad thing to take time for yourself." Ana put the pieces back in order and got up from the small table nestled in the corner of her room. Her expression changed to a more serious one when she looked back to Angela. "There is something else I need to discuss with you. But first I think I will make some tea. Would you like some?"

"Ah, no thank you." Angela stood up as well. "When you finish making your tea, come to my study. We can talk there. There are a few applications I need to look over."

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For the last half hour Angela was sitting at her desk going through the last of the research applications. There were a couple that caught her eye but the rest would receive a letter that basically said "better luck next time." She put the applications in their appropriate folders and

leaned back into her chair.

Angela peered through the door she left open and saw that the hallway was still empty. Ana still wasn't done making tea so she found herself with time to think.

Ana was trying to set her up with Fareeha and not for just a date. *She wants us to get married.* In truth, Angela had thought about marriage before but she purposefully kept herself busy to avoid that line of thought. *There's no way to know that this would even work out.*

There was still some part of her that wanted to try though. With all the stories Ana told her about Fareeha, Angela felt that she knew the woman, at least in some way. It sounded like she had a beautiful family and Angela would be lying if she said she did not want that. Suddenly, trying didn't seem so bad.

*Just watch. I'll meet Fareeha, fall helplessly in love with her, get married, and live happily ever after all because Ana decided to play matchmaker.* She chuckled at the thought.

"I hope that that's the good sort of laugh." Ana was standing at the doorway with her arms overlapped. She crossed the space between them and sat in the chair in front of Angela's desk.

*Still so silent.* "You can say it was." Looking at Ana's empty hands Angela asked, "Where's your tea?"

"I drank it in the kitchen."

"I guess that's what took you so long." Angela put a serious expression on. "What did you need to talk about?"

Ana looked like she was gathering her thoughts. "There's been some troubling activity lately. Have you heard of Talon?"

Angela shook her head no. "I can't say that I have."

"They are a group that value family. What's more accurate to say is that they value family bloodlines." She paused for a moment. "They have been targeting cities with leaders that seem to have an ending bloodline. It's mostly been smaller cities but I believe they will make a move to the larger cities soon."

"Targeting?"

"The head of the city receives a letter and by the end of a week's time, they end up dead in their home. A few new families have been established as the new leaders."

Angela's blood went cold. She knew exactly what kind of letter she was talking about. With shaking hands, Angela pulled out a key and unlocked the box on her desk. Taking out the letter, she handed it to Ana.

The older woman quickly unfolded the letter and read what the small message. "When did you get this?"

The cold feeling of dread still wouldn't let up. "Six days ago."

Ana quickly stood up and prompted Angela to do the same. Grabbing her hand, Ana lead both of them out of the room at a brisk pace. "We leave tonight then." They headed straight for Angela's room. "I want you to pack up. Take anything you think you'll need."

“What about the city? The hospital? I can’t just leave without saying anything Ana.” They reached the room and Ana opened the door, dragging Angela with her.

“Leave your staff a note saying that you’ll be on vacation. Have them pass the word to anyone you think important enough. You can give more detailed instructions once you are safe.”

If Angela had any complaints, she didn’t show it. Instead she walked to her drawers and started pulling out clothes. Turning to Ana she gave her a key. “I have my research notes in the bottom drawer of the desk in my study. Could you get them for me?”

“Of course. Is there anything else you need?”

“No.”

Ana left the room and Angela continued to pack.

“I can’t believe this.” *If one more day would have passed... If Ana didn’t show up I could have been...* Angela shook the thought out of her head. “*Just think on the bright side. I needed a vacation anyway.*”

She packed quickly, mainly stuffing her bags with whatever she deemed necessary and irreplaceable. By the time she was done, Ana was standing in the doorway with the research notes in one hand and her travel bag hanging off her shoulder.

Handing Angela the notes Ana asked, “Are you done packing?”

“Yes, I just need to write the note for my staff.” Angela walked over to desk in her room and quickly set about her task. When she was done, she sealed the letter and walked over to her baggage. “This should do it. I’ll leave it near the front door.”

Ana moved from the doorway and took some of Angela’s bags. “Let’s go then.”

When they reached the front of the home, Angela dropped the letter addressed to her staff on the small table near the door. Ana reached out and opened the door. Looking into the darkness outside, Ana seemed to be searching for something.

“It looks good. We should hurry though.”

Closing the door, Angela locked it with her key and followed after Ana.

When they reached Ana’s car, the older woman opened the passenger door and began to place their luggage in the back. She walked over to the other side and popped open the fuel compartment. She dropped a fuel tablet in and closed it. Angela was already in her seat when Ana stepped inside and turned the car on.

“When I checked around earlier, I didn’t see anything suspicious so we should be able to leave without any problems.” Ana sped off the property and onto the road leading out of the city.

“Earlier? So you didn’t go make tea.”

“You caught me again. You know, you should be a doctor with how smart you are.”

The mood seemed to lighten with Ana’s remark.

“I’ll keep that in mind.” Trying to keep the feeling of dread pushed back Angela kept the conversation going. “You know Ana, I’ve thought about what you said earlier.”

“Earlier?” Ana made to look like she was wracking her brain for something. “You mean the thing about you being bad at chess?”

Angela found herself laughing at the obvious distraction. “If you must know it was about the proposal.”

“Oh yeah? What did you think about?”

A small blush crept up her face. Scratching her head, she said, “Well, if she’s willing to give it a try then so am I.”

Ana nearly drove them off the road. She took one hand off the steering wheel and grabbed one of Angela’s. “My eye is tearing up right now. The eyepatch is getting a little damp though.” Her voice sounded so cheerful. “Now that we’ll be spending the next three days together, it’s time I tell you the best stories about Fareeha.”

Angela squeezed her hand. “That sounds lovely.”

## Two

### Chapter Summary

There's a meeting, more tea, and a dinner.

### Chapter Notes

I'd say that this is mainly a happy chapter. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next night in Switzerland Amélie was sitting on her hotel bed sharpening her knives. The doctor had to die tonight and she was making sure her tools were up to the job. She had a suspicion that tonight she would not need them. Last night, a car was seen leaving the home and the target was nowhere to be found. A day later there was no change in status.

A series of knocks on the door alerted her that her partner just got back. She crossed the small space to the door and looked through the peephole to confirm the scowling face she was looking for. Amélie opened the door and the man was still standing there with his arms crossed looking none too happy.

His face gave her all the information she needed but then again, he always looked like that. Just to confirm her suspicions she asked, "I take it they are still gone?"

Her partner seemed to scowl even more as he walked in the room to reply. "We should have taken care of her last night. She was never going to accept any of those proposals."

Amélie shut the door and gave an amused laugh. He seemed to be invested in this one. "You didn't have to come you know. Is she someone special Hanzo?" She grabbed her sharpened knives and placed them in their various compartments hidden within her clothing.

He grunted. "She's important to *her*."

Amélie walked to the wardrobe and took out the single white lab coat that was hanging. She put the coat on and clipped on the name tag she stole from a surgeon that looked remarkably similar to her. "I'm going to the hospital to see if she told anyone where she went. You keep watch from outside."

Hanzo made no objections so she simply opened the door and walked out. She heard the sound of the door closing and footsteps following along.

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The research hospital was impressive. Amélie had to admit that there was no rival. She could see why, despite her non-appearance in political meetings, the city still loved the doctor. She took care of her people. It was a shame she had to die.

She looked to the building behind her and saw Hanzo perched on top of it. Amélie turned back and walked up to the doors. With her name tag in clear view, she pulled open the doors and walked over to the stairs and headed for the floor with the offices on it. No one seemed to notice her. Today was her look alike's day off. Unless the woman was a workaholic, it was unlikely Amélie would run into her here.

When she arrived at her "office" she quickly looked around for anything she could use to divert attention away from her face. She spotted an empty folder and stuffed it with random files she found lying around. Whoever Nina Caspari was, she wasn't very neat.

Folder in hand Amélie crossed over to the director's office. When she arrived at Angela's office, she peered inside the open door to see an assistant working at their desk. *This will do*. Opening up the folder she pretended to be very interested in the files within. She walked up to the assistant, barely looking up from her cover.

The assistant seemed to recognize her. "Is there anything I can do for you Ms. Caspari?"

Attempting her best Swiss accent and careful to keep her face obstructed by the folder Amélie replied. "Ah, yes. I have the research that Dr. Ziegler requested. She seems to not be in the office at the moment. Do you happen to know where she is?"

Peeking above the folder, Amélie could see that the assistant started to look a little worried. "Are you okay Ms. Caspari? You sound a little sick."

"Oh, I seem to have caught a minor cold. Must have been from one of my patients." She added a cough for effect. "It should clear up by tomorrow."

The assistant seemed satisfied with her answer. "That's good to know. As for Dr. Ziegler, I received word from her staff that she's on vacation. She didn't mention where she was going. It was very sudden but she's always busy and rarely takes a day off. I think a vacation would do her some good."

"Did they mention when she would be back?"

"Ah, no. They said that she would send another letter when she got wherever she was going. Something about 'going where the wind takes her.' Did you need me to put that research on her desk?"

"That won't be necessary. This is my only copy and I don't want it to get lost." Without bothering for a proper goodbye, Amélie just left. On her way to the stairs, she dropped the folder in the trash and walked quickly down to the bottom floor.

Once outside, she headed straight to the car and climbed in. She waited a few moments before Hanzo joined her inside.

Amélie kept her gaze forward. "They say she's on vacation. They don't know where she went either or for that matter when she'll be back." She turned the car on and started driving.

"She must have known then." Without even looking at her partner, she could almost feel Hanzo's scowl deepen.

"Exactly. We're going to the home to see if we can find out where she went."

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Amélie parked the car far from sight a good distance away from the Ziegler home. Glancing

beside her, Hanzo walked with a calm grace. He seemed deep in thought.

Using the cover of night, Amélie and Hanzo took care to avoid any guards and made it to the back entrance. Amélie pulled out her lock picking kit and in a matter of seconds got the door to open. They stepped inside quietly, closing the door with just as much silence.

"The good doctor keeps all of her documents in the study. We check there first."

Her silent companion agreed with a nod.

As they made their way through the dark home, Amélie noticed a lack of staff. *She must have sent them on vacation as well.* They reached the study with no instances. Amélie checked the door and was pleased to find it unlocked. She walked straight to the desk and began her search.

"Our best clue would be some type of letter," she said.

While Amélie worked on the drawers on the left side of the desk, Hanzo focused on the right side. The top drawer was filled with hastily written notes and surprisingly detailed drawings. He opened the second drawer and found that it was filled with patient files. He didn't bother with those. The next drawer was filled with nothing but blue envelopes. He took the top most one and frowned.

The broken Amari seal was an offending sight. He picked up a couple more of the envelopes and saw that they all had the same seal on it. Putting them back, he opened the first letter that he grabbed and began to read its contents.

After reading the letter, Hanzo dropped his shaking hand and subconsciously started to crumple the paper. "Ana," he seethed. "She's with Ana and they are going to Egypt." A memory of rain and fading brown eyes flashed through his mind.

Amélie stopped her task to look at her partner. "Then we are done here. We report back to Talon. Until the plan develops further, Egypt is off limits." She took the crumpling letter from his hand and smoothed it out. Putting it back in its envelope, she placed the letter back in the drawer filled with identical ones and closed it.

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As they got farther away from Switzerland, Angela felt herself growing anxious at the thought of leaving. The past three days smoothed over that feeling with Ana's endless supply of stories about Fareeha. Her stomach muscles were sore with all the laughing she did. They were ten minutes away from the Amari home and Ana still would not let up with the stories.

"Before we arrive at my home, I have to tell you the story of Pharah."

Despite her sore muscles, the name alone peaked her interest and Angela found herself wanting to hear the story behind it. "I have a feeling that you saved the best for last."

"Of course! So it started off like this: Fareeha was six years old when one of her caretakers, I think her name was Rashida, accidentally spilled a cup of water all over the poor girl. She was so upset over it. I was in a meeting at the time so my little Fareeha was stuck with the woman. Next thing Rashida knew, Fareeha had disappeared. She spent hours looking for that girl!" Ana stopped to laugh.

"So when does Pharah come in?"

"Oh we're getting there. After my meeting ended Rashida came rushing to me and explained

everything that happened. I told her not to worry about it because I had a feeling where Fareeha went. Sure enough, when I entered my bedroom I found her sitting on a stool with a bucket of water next to her. She was so busy painting herself all over with blue feathers that she didn't even notice me. She had a blue cape tied around her neck and her head was covered by a yellow hat that was a bit too big. So I said, 'Fareeha, what are you doing?'" Ana couldn't keep her laughter contained. "Do you know what she said Angela?" she asked between laughs.

Angela was already trying to keep her laughter under control. "I'm guessing this is where Pharah comes in."

Ana nodded as she wiped away some tears. "She said, 'Call me Pharah mama. I'm about to go deliver some justice. As soon as I finish my feathers.' I had to see where this was going so I just said, 'Okay' and watched her work."

"When she finished the feathers, my little 'Pharah' dragged the bucket by her side and headed towards the second floor balcony. Angela you should have seen it! She dragged a chair onto the balcony and stood on top of, the cute cape billowing in the wind. She had her hands on her hips and just waited. She stood on that chair for *hours* waiting for Rashida to walk into the gardens."

"Did she even show up?"

"Here's the thing Angela, Rashida was never going to show up so I decided to give Pharah a helping hand."

"Ana no you didn't!"

"I couldn't help it! I wanted to see 'justice' happen. I grabbed one of the passing messengers and told him to bring Rashida to the gardens. While I waited for her to arrive, I backed up so I wouldn't be in the radius of justice. Oh Angela, when Rashida finally showed up, 'Pharah' looked so happy. The woman barely took two steps towards me when she flipped the contents of the bucket over the railing and yelled out 'Justice rains from above!'" By this point they had arrived at Ana's home and the two women were shaking in their seats with laughter.

After calming down Angela still had a question about the story. "What happened with Rashida?"

"Oh she was surprisingly okay with it. Of course, after the initial shock wore off. She just looked up at Fareeha and said, 'Justice needs a bath.' That sent the girl running and Rashida just chased after her." Ana opened her door and began to step out. "I don't think I'll ever forget that story."

Angela climbed out of the passenger side and started gathering her bags. "I don't think I can either."

Once Ana and Angela had all their bags in hand they started walking towards the home. The first thing Angela noticed was the heat. She was starting to sweat buckets. Her hair stuck to her face and her clothing started to stick to her body. She peered over at Ana and the older woman looked like the change in temperature didn't bother her.

Once they were inside the gates Ana started to pick up the pace and lead them into the home. Angela noticed that most of the home was made of white stone. It looked like it was carved from something.

"Once we get you settled in your room, we'll go look for Fareeha."

Angela gave a nervous smile at that. She just spent the last three days listening to all the embarrassing stories Ana had to offer about Fareeha. That didn't mean that she wasn't nervous to meet her. The stories just made the idea of Fareeha more endearing.

Half an hour after unpacking, Ana was leading Angela through her home. As they looked for Fareeha, Ana would talk about different parts of the household. The bath in particular seemed lovely. Ana had described it as more like a spa than a bath. "You'll know what I'm talking about when you get in there," she told her.

They passed by what looked like to be a throne carved into the wall. The surrounding pillars and golden accents made it look so regal. She found herself staring. Ana noticed Angela's absence from her side and backtracked to where the woman was standing. "It's a relic from the past. Hana likes to sit in it sometimes."

Angela seemed intrigued. "How long has your family looked after Egypt?"

"Ah, that's the thing. We are not so sure. What's certain is that 'a long time' is most appropriate." She took a moment to look at the past. "We should head outside."

At the older woman's suggestion, they walked outside towards the training yard. "She likes to be outside," Ana explained.

As they neared the training yard, a rather flustered looking guard coming from there rushed passed them. Ana whipped around with a knowing smirk on her face. "Excuse me!" she yelled to the guard.

The guard stopped in her tracks and turned to face Ana. A nervous look accompanied her flustered appearance. "Yes ma'am?" She tried not to look at Ana too long, choosing instead to dart her eyes every which way.

"Would you happen to know where my daughter is?" Ana feigned a look of cluelessness. "I just have no idea where she could be."

The guard was obviously trying to calm down. "She's uh- she's..." The guard's eyes trailed over to the training yard and she seemed to look even more embarrassed as the seconds ticked by. "Just up ahead. She's training."

"Thank you. Enjoy your day," said Ana.

Angela watched as the guard instantly looked relieved and scuttled away. "What was that about?" she asked.

"She's one of those admirers I was talking about."

The guard's actions instantly clicked. "Oh. You weren't kidding."

"I'm afraid good looks run in the family. We are doomed to be..." Ana put a hand up to her forehead and sighed out her next words. "Stunningly beautiful."

Angela made no comment and walked ahead of Ana. Ana caught up to her shortly after being left behind. "It's true Angela I swear!"

Trying to keep her smile hidden, Angela held her gaze forward. They walked past the training yard entryway and in the distance, she could see two people sparring. The one in the loose pink shirt and the long hair was sending a series of kicks and jabs to her partner. The girl in pink showed no sign of slowing down.

She shifted her gaze to the other woman and stopped in her tracks. She was... "Beautiful."

Nearly running into Angela, Ana recovered in time to hear the dazed woman speak. "Ha, ha! I told you!"

Angela didn't seem to register Ana's words. She was too busy staring. The woman, whom she could only assume was Fareeha, was stunning. With her feet light on the ground, she blocked and ducked away from the younger girl's jabs and kicks. Her white shirt clung to sweat soaked skin and Angela could see just how defined she was.

Even with Ana throwing her a knowing smirk, Angela still couldn't look away. Fareeha's gorgeous jet black hair stuck to the side of her face and the sun highlighted the sweat glistening on her bronzed skin. She watched as a bead of sweat trailing down from her forehead curved under her eye and seemed to trace the tattoo below. Simply mesmerizing. If Angela was being rude for staring so long, she didn't have the heart to care.

Seeming to notice the arrival of Ana and her guest, Fareeha looked up and locked eyes with Angela. It was only for a split second but that's all it took. Hana's kick was coming in for her face and Fareeha knew she wouldn't dodge it in time. She tried her best to get back but the collision was inevitable.

In a quick moment's time, Fareeha felt the impact of Hana's boot colliding with her face. She quickly lost her balance and fell backwards onto the ground.

Hana was in a panic. "I'm so sorry mama! I thought you were going to dodge that!"

Fareeha brought a hand up to her face and wiped some of the blood away. Nothing seemed to be broken so she counted herself lucky. "It's alright Hana, it wasn't your fault. It just goes to show what you can do when your opponent is distracted."

She suddenly felt cool hands on her jaw. The woman with the most beautiful eyes was examining her face with skilled precision. She felt fingers gently prod her injuries and Fareeha couldn't help but get lost in those eyes.

The woman pulled out a roll of gauze from out of nowhere and ripped off a section. She neatly folded the strip and used it to put pressure on her split lip. "Nothing seems to be broken." Taking one of Fareeha's hands, she guided it to the gauze on her lip. Her fingers tingled at that. "Keep pressure on it and the bleeding should stop soon."

Fareeha nodded but kept staring anyway.

"Nice kick Hana," said Ana. Hana gave a sheepish smile in reply.

Ana smirked down at her dazed daughter on the ground. "Aren't you going to introduce yourself or do you prefer to keep staring?"

Fareeha seemed to snap out of it and was polite enough to look embarrassed. "Sorry," she said. Extending her hand to the blonde Fareeha introduce herself. "I'm Fareeha. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Angela took the offered hand and began to pull the other woman up. Fareeha seemed a little startled by that but made no comment. "My name is Angela, the pleasure is mine."

Hana perked up at the mention of Angela's name. She no longer looked guilty for giving her mama a busted lip. "You're Angela? So that means you're here to marry mama right?" The sparkles in her eyes were intensely glowing.

Both Angela and Fareeha looked embarrassed by her inquiry.

"Hana," Fareeha started. "That's--"

Angela cut her off. "Something like that."

Fareeha couldn't even sputter out the last of her sentence.

Ana put an arm around Angela's shoulders and said, "That's the spirit!" Looking to Hana and Fareeha Ana continued. "Come on my darlings. It's tea time. There's going to be cookies! You should all get to know each other." Turning Angela and herself back towards the gardens, Ana started to lead them.

"Mother, Hana and I need to bathe. We were out here for hours." Fareeha started to blush. "I'm sure Angela doesn't want to suffer through that."

Ana turned them around and gave a wicked smirk. "Angela won't mind," she gave the blonde a knowing smirk, "right?"

"Ah well..." Angela look to Fareeha and quickly found the ground very interesting. "Not at all."

Having grown impatient, Hana grabbed Fareeha's unoccupied hand and started to drag her along. "Come on then! Angela doesn't mind us being smelly and nana said there's cookies!"

They all laughed at the girl's enthusiasm.

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The four of them were all seated at the table near the river drinking tea while Hana munched on cookies. The younger girl wasn't a fan of the taste of tea so she always poured in enough sugar to mask the flavor. She drank hers in under a minute and was working on the cookies shortly afterwards. She never did have patience for appreciating tea.

Fareeha would try to grab a cookie but Hana would lift the plate away and complain that "she wasn't done yet". Angela found herself endeared by the sight.

"Your definition of 'done' is eating them all," Fareeha said after her fifth attempt of trying to grab a cookie.

"You'll still love me anyway."

Fareeha rolled her eyes at that. "Of course but that's not the issue here."

Ana put her cup down and looked over to Hana. "Hana dear, may I have a cookie?"

Still eating with one hand, Hana grabbed a cookie and handed it to her grandmother. "Here you go nana," she said through cookie filled bites.

Fareeha's eye twitched at the sight and Angela couldn't help but giggle at her frustration. Fareeha stopped her antics with Hana and looked over to Angela. She gave the blonde a shy smile and went back to sipping her tea.

Ana was finished with her tea and looked at her daughter in disappointment. She was supposed to be talking to the doctor, not hiding behind her cup. *My work is never done.* She cleared her throat to get her daughter's attention. "So I take it you'll be bringing Angela to the festival next week right?"

Angela seemed intrigued. "There's a festival next week?"

Ana gave Fareeha a pointed brow and her daughter seemed to get the message. "Ah, yes," Fareeha began. "It's actually relatively new." She looked over to Hana. "Hana really likes animals. After I took her to her first festival in Egypt, she really wanted to have one for animals just so she could dress up like one. So now we have a festival for that."

Hana looked proud as Fareeha explained the festival.

"Hana goes as a 'the Pink Rabbit' every year. The people really seem to like it."

"Do you dress up?" asked Angela.

"I usually go as a bird."

Angela smiled at that. "Do you also rain justice during the festival?"

Fareeha went wide eyed and quickly snapped her head towards her mother. "You told her about that?"

Ana had a mischievous smile. "It was a long three days of driving. Had to pass the time somehow." Ana still held her smile as she addressed Angela. "You should go as a bird too. The both of you can be a pair of lovebirds."

Angela seemed to love the idea. "That sounds perfect Ana!" She clasped her hands together in excitement. "We can both have painted feathers!"

Fareeha couldn't take the embarrassment and hid her face behind her hands. Sensing that her mama needed a pick me up, Hana handed Fareeha the last cookie. It was half-eaten but it was still a gesture of good will. "Here mama, you can have the last cookie."

With one hand still covering her face, Fareeha reached for the cookie and began to eat it. "Thank you Hana."

Angela giggled and tried to get the flustered woman to talk again. "What's wrong Fareeha? You don't want to take me to the festival?"

Fareeha's head shot up and she quickly responded. "No! I mean yes!" She paused to compose herself. It didn't help. "O-of course I'll take you."

"Can we still dress up as birds?" Angela gently asked.

Fareeah seemed to calm down with that. "Of course. Whatever you want."

"So even painted feathers?"

Fareeha sounded more confident. "Yes, even painted feathers."

"Then it's a date."

The other woman smiled at that.

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The rest of the afternoon went by smoothly. The four of them stayed sitting in the garden talking adamantly about whatever they pleased. Ana still tried to suggest couple-ly things for Fareeha and

Angela to do and Angela seemed very receptive to it all. After a while of that, Fareeha was no longer embarrassed by her mother's meddling and went along with it. She was enjoying Angela's company and she found herself looking forward to spending more time with the doctor.

As they talked, Hana looked towards the river and suddenly got an idea. "Mama, let's go in the river." She sniffed herself. "I'm still smelly." She leaned over and sniffed her mother. "And so are you."

The girl didn't bother for a response and went to work taking her boots off. Once she finished that, she grabbed Fareeha's hand and started to lead them to the river. Fareeha ended up alternating between hopping along on one foot as she tried to take her boots off. As soon as she had the second shoe in hand, Hana picked up the pace and pulled them both into the water.

Angela observed as Fareeha expertly kept her boot above the water and tossed it into the grass. She tried not to stare at the woman and instead focused on how much fun the two seemed to be having. Fareeha would splash at her daughter and Hana would try to dunk her mother underneath the water by jumping on her back and leaning back. Fareeha seemed to have excellent upper body strength seeing as the girl couldn't complete her goal. Angela couldn't help but enjoy the sight.

"They're wonderful right?"

Angela focused her attention back to Ana. "Yes. They look so happy together." She brought her hands under her chin and looked back to the two in the river. "I'm glad to be here."

"So I take it the two of you will get married soon, yes?"

Angela bit her lip as she smiled and started to trace random patterns on the table. "She's lovely," was all she said in response.

Ana seemed satisfied with the answer.

Hana shouting "Mama!" could be heard in the distance. Ana and Angela looked to the river in time to see Fareeha tossing the curled up seventeen-year-old into the river. When Hana emerged from the water she stumbled on her way back to Fareeha. She said something to her mother and Fareeha bent over to let the girl climb on her back. Walking with sure steps, Fareeha made her way out of the water and bent down to pick up her discarded boot. She did the same for the other boot and approached the table.

When they reached Ana and Angela, Fareeha bent down to pick up Hana's boots with her other hand and stood back up. The water pooled onto the ground creating a small puddle. "We're going back inside. This one is tired and we need to change." Waving her boot filled hands towards Angela and her mother, she continued on her way into the garden.

Ana got up after her daughter left and collected their used dishes on a tray. "We should head in too."

Angela followed after Ana.

When they reached the garden entryway, Ana seemed to get an idea. "I'll try to get Fareeha to cook tonight. Once you taste her cooking, you'll marry her on the spot." Ana nodded sagely at her brilliant idea.

"It's that good?" asked Angela.

"Trust me, it's that good."

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A couple of hours had passed since they got inside. Ana, true to her word, got Fareeha to cook dinner for them. Angela decided to bathe and she was very impressed with the bath. It was deep and wide. The bath itself being built into the ground. When she filled it up, the whole room steamed up and she felt so relaxed. She may or may not have spent a whole hour in there.

After bathing, the doctor talked with Ana to pass the time. She felt guilty for not writing to her staff but decided that she would worry about her situation tomorrow.

A disheveled looking Hana walked into the sitting room and plopped down next to her grandmother. She laid her head on Ana's lap and the older woman instinctively went to smooth over the girl's messy hair.

"Sleep well?" asked Ana.

"Yeah but I'm still tired though. I only got up because I smelled food."

"Fareeha's cooking."

Angela observed as Hana instantly perked up. *It must really be that good.*

"Please tell me she's making the soup." Hana really liked soup, mainly because it was so easy to eat.

"Go see for yourself."

Hana wasted no time and bounded off towards the kitchen. Angela smiled as the girl nearly ran into a wall on the way there.

Ana gave Angela that 'I told you' look. "Do you believe me now?"

"I think I'll stop doubting you from now on."

"That's a good habit to pick up. It seems you are learning."

Hana came running back into the room. "It's ready! Come on, we already set the table." She took Angela's hand and started heading towards the dining room. Calling over her shoulder she said, "Hurry up nana! I'll make sure Angela gets the good seat."

As it turns out, the good seat was right beside Fareeha. The woman seemed more comfortable talking to Angela because she didn't hesitate to make conversation.

"The bread was made this morning so it's not something I made. Everything else is the work of yours truly," she said, pointing a thumb to her chest. "I hope you like it."

Just then Ana pulled out a chair and sat down. "If she likes it, she'll have to marry you. Isn't that right Angela?"

The blonde playfully nodded along. "Of course."

Fareeha joined in as well. "Fingers crossed."

Dinner consisted of a green soup, an eggplant dish with onions and vegetables, and a side of bread. Hana looked very happy. Pointing towards the bowl in front of Angela Hana said, "You have to have the soup first. Dip the bread in it too. It makes the bread taste better." She picked up the bread and tore it apart over her soup. Taking her spoon, she started to passionately eat her

soup.

Angela took Hana's advice and started with the soup. She tore off a piece of her bread and dipped it into the liquid. Once it touched her tongue, Angela couldn't hold in the appreciative moan. She swallowed the piece and looked over to Fareeha eating her eggplant. "I think the wedding should be soon," she said.

Fareeha made a choking noise but managed to keep her food down. She reached for her glass of water and downed the whole thing. The coughing wouldn't let up. Ana was holding her stomach and wiping away tears as she laughed at Fareeha's reaction.

Still eating, Hana grabbed her cup of water and gave it to Fareeha. "Here mama, don't die," she said between bites.

Fareeha took the glass and took her time drinking it. Her coughing settled down and a look of relief flooded her face. After gaining control over her choking spell, Fareeha spoke up. "I'm glad that you like it."

Angela was relieved to see that the other woman stopped choking. "I didn't mean to make you choke."

"No, I'm fine. Just...caught off guard."

Ana started humming a wedding song to herself.

-

After dinner was over, Hana announced that she was going back to sleep. Ana made up some excuse about needing to be somewhere else so it just left Angela and Fareeha alone together.

Angela was studying Fareeha's face. She noticed that the cut on her lip had closed and a bruise was forming on her cheek. "How does your face feel?"

"I'll be okay. I'm just glad she didn't break anything." She turned her attention to the dishes on the table. "I'll get the dishes." Fareeha made a move to get up.

"I'll help you then." Angela got up too and started gathering dishes.

"Ah, thank you."

The two women headed towards the kitchen, all the dishes stacked neatly in their hands. Fareeha led them to the sink and had the dishes stacked on the side. She started the water and let the sink fill up. When it was a quarter of the way filled she turned off the water and poured some soap in.

"You don't have to stay. I can finish these. I'm sure you're tired," said Fareeha.

"Oh no, I want to help." Angela grabbed a hanging dish cloth and continued. "I'll dry them."

Alright then.

The two cleaned the dishes in comfortable silence. Fareeha would glance over at Angela drying the dishes every now and then and smile. Angela was a lovely woman.

After the dishes were finished, Fareeha made to leave. "I had a good day Angela, although I'm sure you are tired now. I'll leave you be."

Angela reached out for a hand and stopped Fareeha from leaving. "Wait."

The other woman turned back towards her, brows furrowed. "Is there something wrong?"

Angela took a deep breathe to calm her nerves. "No it's just that before I left for Egypt, I told your mother that I would give you a chance."

Fareeha had surprise in her eyes. "She wasn't just dragging you along?"

"No. I mean, when she first mentioned it I was somewhat reluctant but..." She seemed to be searching for words. "Did you know that your mother talks about you every chance she gets? From all her stories, I felt that I knew you in a way. So when I thought about her plans for us more, I *wanted* to meet you."

Fareeha's expression held a gentle happiness. "Yeah?"

"Yes, of course. So what I'm trying to say is..." She gave their hands a squeeze. "I'm willing to try if you are." When she let go of Fareeha's hand, the tingles wouldn't let up.

Fareeha smiled a beautiful smile that showed her teeth. Angela was feeling butterflies at the sight. "Yes, yes. Absolutely.

"Now that that's settled, I do have one request."

"What is it?"

"Walk me back to my room?"

Fareeha offered her arm and Angela grabbed on to it. She stopped to turned off the wall lamps and led them out of the kitchen.

## Chapter End Notes

I think there's going to be a lot of tea time in the foreseeable future. I sure can't wait for that festival I made up.

# Three

## Chapter Summary

Breakfast, Tracer, and a trip.

## Chapter Notes

Ya'll read the tag about Tracer right? Okay.

Angela woke up the next morning feeling refreshed. She dreamed of beautiful smiles and gentle touches. It was nice. She looked forward to having more of them.

Lifting the covers off, Angela swung her legs over the side of the bed and got up. She stretched her arms over her head and shook out the lingering sleep from her body. Years of being a surgeon conditioned her to wake up early. She peeked out the window to see that the sun was barely rising. There were some guards patrolling the property but not much else was happening.

Glancing over to the desk she sighed. "I should start on that letter." Angela pulled out the desk chair and sat down. Checking several of the drawers, she found what she was looking for. Inside one of the drawers was some paper, a pen, envelopes and melting wax. She lit the lamp on her desk and set to work."

*I have decided that until further notice, my vacation will be extended. As of yet, I have not decided on a return date. I trust that my instructions will be followed and if need be, your judgements in matters will be sound. Please pass along the following instructions to the intended individuals.*

*To my staff: Since I will not be at the home consider your vacations extended as well. Make sure the accountant gives you paid leave. As for my messenger, I am sorry to have her work while I am not there but I would like for her to deliver my letters to my assistant at the hospital. I do not wish to postpone a response to research applications.*

*To my assistant director: Please take care of the research hospital. My assistant will be a great help for filling in the gaps and she should pass along research applications for your evaluation. If necessary, you may bring in more research assistants to lighten the load my absence will bring.*

*To my political advisors: Please keep in mind the big three. Education, medicine, and livelihood.*

*Should anyone need to contact me, I am staying with an old friend at the Amari home in Egypt. All letters should be addressed there.*

*Your protector,*

*Angela*

Satisfied with her letter, Angela went to melt some wax. She folded the letter and placed it inside the envelope. She addressed the letter to her home and wrote 'For My Messenger' across the front.

When the wax finished melting, she poured some on the back of the envelope and pressed her seal into it.

"That should do," she said to herself.

A quick look out the window showed the sun had climbed higher in the sky. Angela went to the wardrobe to get ready for the day. There were a number of things to wear but the blue sun dress was what caught her eye. *Fareeha likes blue*. Taking out the dress, she started getting ready. She draped the dress over her body and combed out her hair. After putting her hair up in its usual style, she pulled on some white sandals and grabbed the letter she wrote.

She was just about to head for the door when someone knocked. Angela crossed the room and opened it to see who it was. On the other side of the door stood Hana.

The girl was tracing her boot on the ground and looked up when the door opened. She examined the older woman for a moment and settled for a smile. "You look very pretty in that dress Angela. I'm sure mama will like it too."

Angela blushed at the comment. "Ah- thank you Hana."

Hana gave her two thumbs up. "If you want to keep impressing mama, just come to me. I know all the important details."

The blonde smiled and crossed her arms at that. "Oh really? What kinds of details do you know?"

"I know that mama likes your eyes. When we were going to the garden yesterday she said and I quote 'Such pretty eyes.' She had that dreamy look too."

Angela bit her smile at the revelation and Hana seemed proud of herself.

"Anyway," Hana continued. "Nana sent me here to bring you to breakfast. Mama is still in the bath otherwise nana would have asked her."

"Lead the way."

Hana grabbed the woman's hand and basically dragged her to the dining room where Ana was waiting. The older woman was drinking tea. She lifted her eye to look at them when she heard their arrival.

"Good morning Angela. The tea is still hot if you'd like some."

The doctor took a seat next to Ana and put her letter to the side. "Thank you. Good morning to you as well." She grabbed her empty tea cup and reached for the pot. While making her tea, she asked Ana a question. "Ana, where might I find your messenger. I need them to send that follow-up letter."

"Right now he is probably off receiving letters at the exchange. He should be back by late morning." Ana pointed to the envelope on the table. "Is that it?"

"Yes."

"Don't worry about it then." Ana took the letter and placed it within her lightweight coat. "I'll make sure it gets to him."

"Thank you."

Hana, having chosen the seat across from Angela was eating furiously. Noticing that Angela hadn't touched any food yet, she pushed a bowl towards her. "Here try these first." She stuffed her mouth some more before continuing. "It's good."

Angela looked at the bowl's contents. It seemed to be a variety of seasoned olives. Taking an interest in the dish, she spooned some out of the bowl onto her plate.

The basket of bread was pushed in front of her plate soon after. "With bread," said Hana.

Angela took some of the offered bread and scooped some of the olive mixture onto it. Taking a bite, she found it to be quite good and set to work filling her empty stomach.

The sounds of boots walking towards the dining room got the attention of the three sitting at the table. Hana stopped eating to greet her mother. "Good morning mama." She resumed where she left off.

Fareeha chuckled at Hana's dedication to her meal. She walked over to her daughter and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Good morning Hana." Walking over to her mother, she did the same. "Good morning mother."

Angela was captivated by the affection displayed. When Ana kissed her daughter back she gave Angela a side glance and then looked back to her daughter. "Aren't you going to give Angela a good morning kiss?"

Fareeha blushed at that. "Ah-well mother, that's..." She looked over to Angela and her blush deepened.

Angela extended her hand and beckoned for Fareeha to join her. "Come here," she said gently.

When Fareeha got close enough, Angela took one of her hands and stood up. She locked eyes with the taller woman for a moment. Lifting herself up with her toes Angela closed the distance between them. She placed a kiss on Fareeha's cheek, just beneath the tattoo. "Good morning Fareeha." Her lips tingled pleasantly and she smiled at Fareeha's blushing face.

From the corner of her eye, Angela could see both Ana and Hana silently cheering her on. When she dropped back down to her normal height, she continued to gaze into Fareeha's eyes. She gave her an expectant look.

Fareeha noticed the look and seemed to snap out of her daze. "Sorry, " she said. She leaned down to quickly return the greeting. Fareeha's lips were so soft on Angela's cheek. The doctor closed her eyes and reveled in the feeling. As the taller woman pulled away, some of her damp hair brushed against the blonde's face and she giggled at the tickling sensation. "Good morning Angela."

Angela let their hands go and sat back down again, smiling at what just transpired. She watched as Fareeha took the seat beside her and reached for the plate of fava beans. The woman spooned some onto her plate and grabbed some bread from the basket. When her plate was set she looked back at Angela.

"I like your dress," she started, "It looks very nice on you." Taking a moment to examine the garment again she looked back up at Angela. "It matches your eyes."

Angela could feel a kick from underneath the table and her attention focused on Hana mouthing "I told you." She gave the girl a wide smile and focused back on Fareeha. "Thank you."

They continued to eat their breakfast until Fareeha spoke up again. "So Angela, I was wondering

if you'd like to see some of Egypt. I took the rest of the day off so I have plenty of time to show you around."

Fareeha could see Ana at the head of the table giving her a look of pride. When she noticed her daughter glancing her way, Ana mouthed, "That's my girl," and gave her a thumbs up.

Angela didn't seem to notice. "That sounds wonderful Fareeha. We can get to know each other better."

"Then it's a date."

Angela smiled and nodded in agreement.

-

Tracer was in the gym with Pharah in their base on Gibraltar. She finally convinced the taller woman to spar with her and so far, it was going well. They were at it for the last half hour, both covered in sweat and trying to control their breathing. Their movements were starting to slow down indicating how tired they were getting.

"We should do this more often love!" she dodged a kick. "This is great!."

Pharah grunted in response. "Definitely," she said. She aimed a jab for Tracer's torso.

Tracer raised her arms to block the jab and leaned back a little. Pharah's fist was coming in faster than usual. *This one's gonna hurt.* thought Tracer. Just as the jab was supposed to connect, Tracer's choral accelerator flickered and the fist phased through her arm.

The room went still and all movement stopped. *No. No no no no no.* She looked at her shaking translucent arms and couldn't hold in her fear and panic. She dropped down to her knees and her body started to shake violently. Just the idea of being stuck in that place again. "I-I can't." She tried to wrap her arms around herself but couldn't feel a thing. The tears flowed freely and her voice shook.

Pharah was trying her best to assess the situation. She tried to get Tracer's attention to no avail. "Tracer. Tracer!" She bent down in front of the woman and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Look at me. Try to focus on me."

She looked up at Pharah and the taller woman could see the fear and dread welled up in her eyes. "I can't feel them. I-I'm gonna...I can't go through that again."

Warm arms wrapped around her frame and Tracer found herself being carried. Sensing that she needed some sort of anchor, Pharah pressed Tracer to her body as tight as she could. "You're still here. You're still here with me." She started walking out of the gym, towards the medical bay. "I'm going to get you to Angela." Her steps picked up speed. "We'll get Winston to check on your accelerator."

Tracer's arms seemed to rematerialize and she grabbed onto Pharah's shirt for dear life. She buried her face in her friend's shoulder and stuttered out a response. "I-I can't...I can't g-go back."

When they made it to the med bay Pharah didn't hesitate to rush in. Angela was sitting at her desk looking over the research notes on her tablet when the sudden intrusion caught her attention. She swiveled around in her chair and saw her girlfriend holding a trembling Tracer in her arms.

Not one to take a potential situation lightly Angela immediately went to Fareeha and led her to one of the examination beds. When Fareeha tried to let the woman in her arms down, she clamped on

harder. "Don't let go." Tracer breathed out between choked sobs.

Fareeha instead laid the both of them down onto the bed. She turned her head in the direction of one of the monitors and spoke out a quick command. "Athena, we need Winston here. It's an emergency."

The a.i.'s logo flickered to the screen. "Understood."

Angela began to gently run her fingers over Tracer's trembling shoulder. "What happened Lena?"

Lena didn't respond. Instead, Pharah spoke up. "We were sparring and then her accelerator started to flicker. Next thing I knew, her arms were phasing out of existence." She adjusted her grip on the woman. "She's terrified Angela."

Angela furrowed her brows at this. She could only imagine what her friend was going through. The thought of returning to a void trapped between time and space must have been terrifying. The horrifying uncertainty of being stuck there forever was enough to even make her shiver. Angela ran her fingers over Lena's arm and tried to get the woman to loosen her grip. "Lena, please. I need to make sure your arms are okay."

Fareeha relaxed her grip and Tracer spoke up again. "Please don't let go."

"I promise I won't." Fareeha laced their hands together and slowly started to get off the bed. "I just need to give Angela room to make sure you're okay." She gave a gentle smile and started to rub small circles with her thumbs on the other woman's hands. "Okay?"

Tracer nodded and let Pharah slip into the chair seated next to the bed.

As Angela was examining her arms, Tracer seemed to calm down. She was staring into Pharah's eyes but not really focusing on them. A slight tremble would shake her body every now and then but she remained still and focused on the feeling of their clasped hands. She felt that everything would be okay as long as she could feel those hands in hers. She wasn't going to fade away again. Her friends were here for her. They wouldn't let that happen.

Angela's words brought her out of her thoughts. "Everything seems to be okay Lena."

Lena squeezed Fareeha's hands and let one of them go to wipe away some tears. "Yeah?"

The doctor gave her a reassuring smile. "Yes."

She gave her loose hand a once over and vividly recalled how translucent it looked not long ago. Trying to keep the shaking to a minimum, she grabbed her friend's hand again.

The opening of the med bay doors let them know of Winston's arrival. As he reached the examinations bed he pushed his glasses back up his nose. "Athena said there was an emergency?"

Just as Fareeha went to explain the situation, Lena cut her off. "My accelerator is all wonky is what." Letting go of her friend's hand again, she sat up and tapped at her chest. "It started flickering and my arms started fading out."

Winston looked very concerned at the explanation. "We need to take a look at it then." He walked over to a locked storage container at the edge of the med bay and came back with a kit of tools. "We're going to have to open it up."

Lena squeezed Fareeha's hand impossibly tighter. "Okay." Fareeha winced but made no move to let go of her hand.

Winston went to work examining the choral accelerator. He had Angela assist him with the delicate parts and instructed Athena to run a system diagnosis. Fareeha, true to her word, never let go of Lena's hand.

After fastening everything together again Winston began to speak. "There seems to be nothing wrong with the accelerator. It's running fine." He quirked his head to the side. "Did you find anything Athena?"

"No anomalies were found. Everything is in working order."

The reassurances of everything being fine made Tracer feel uneasy. "Then what happened to me earlier? That can't be nothing."

Winston took a moment to form a response. "I'm not sure what happened but..." He looked concerned. "I can't be sure that we checked everything." He took another moment to gather his thoughts. "What I can do is replace your current accelerator with another one. Just in case."

Tracer seemed very receptive to the idea. "Yeah, let's do that."

"The only problem is that it'll take a couple of days to get everything ready. I need to assemble it and do extensive testing to make sure nothing will go wrong. Are you okay with that? There's not much else I can do."

Tracer couldn't shake the feeling that in a few days she wouldn't even be there. Still, she didn't want to worry her friends any more than she already had. She let go of Fareeha's hand and made to get up from the examination bed. "Sounds good. A few days is nothing!" She started for the door and quickly spun around. "Thanks everyone for caring about me!"

Angela gave her a gentle smile. "Of course Lena. Always."

She made a show to sniff her shirt and scrunch her nose at the smell. "I need a shower. Don't wanna stink up the place." After clearing the door, Tracer made a mad dash for the nearest empty room. She found one of the lounges free and locked the door. Keeping the lights off, she slid down against the door and held her head between her hands.

"It's only gonna be a few days. I'll be okay."

She stayed hunched over her knees and tried to keep the trembling down.

"I'll be okay."

-

After breakfast, Ana left to track down the messenger and Hana went after her grandmother yelling something about a rematch.

Angela and Fareeha were walking towards the front entrance when suddenly she seemed to remember something. "Ah, Angela. Do you mind waiting here for me? There's something I need to get."

"I don't mind."

Fareeha started to head towards where she needed to go. "I'll only take a moment." She picked up the pace and hurried along out of sight.

Now that Angela found herself alone, she began to examine the home more closely. She touched

a hand to the wall to feel the cool stone against her finger tips. Taking small steps, she smoothed her hands along the golden patterns carved into the wall. She stopped walking when she came across a painting. She recognized the woman depicted immediately. It was Ana. She was much younger looking. Both eyes shining straight ahead with an endearing smile on her lips.

Standing in front of her was a small girl wearing a white dress. She was holding onto Ana's arms and looking straight ahead as well. The girl had such a happy smile. "Fareeha..."

"I remember that day you know." Angela nearly stumbled over. She hadn't heard Fareeha come up behind her. Fareeha seemed to notice Angela's distress. "Sorry about that." Pointing back to the painting she spoke again. "It was my seventh birthday." She smiled at the memory and looked back at Angela.

"Are you ready to go?"

Angela took hold of Fareeha's arm. "Yes, let's go."

As they walked to the car, Angela peered over to Fareeha's other hand and saw that she was carrying a leather jacket. Pointing to the jacket, Angela asked, "Is that what you needed to get?"

"Yes."

"But it's so hot! Why would you need a jacket?"

Fareeha looked at her for a moment. She gave a small smile. "Just in case."

When they reached the car, Fareeha opened the passenger door and let Angela climb in. She walked over to the other side and put her jacket in the back seat. After climbing in she started the car and started driving.

"I have to warn you Angela, it's going to be a long drive there."

"And where exactly are we going?"

"It's a secret."

"Well how long is the drive then?"

"It usually takes me three hours to get there. I think if you can sit through three whole days with my mother, you can suffer through three more hours with me."

"I don't think there will be much suffering involved." Angela made herself more comfortable. "So tell me, what's your second favorite color? I already know you like blue."

Fareeha seemed flustered at the comment. "Well ah..." She took a moment to conjure up a second favorite color. "Gold?"

"Are you sure about that? It sounded more like a question."

The sun gleamed through the car window and highlighted Angela's blonde hair. It was positively radiating. Fareeha looked for a moment then turned her attention back to the road. "I'm sure."

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The two easily talked the hours away. Fareeha told Angela little tidbits about Egypt. She mentioned how they are well known for their military. 'We're mostly a defense force though. We do a lot of escort missions now.'

Angela talked adamantly about the research hospital she runs. 'I think I've heard of it. I heard some of the medics talk about it.' 'Yes well, we take in surgeons from all around. They might have sent in applications.' Not long after that, Angela let her position in the city slip through her mouth.

"Wait, wait. You're Dr. Ziegler? The one that never shows up to the city summits?"

Angela seemed embarrassed at the comment. She took to twirling a strand of hair. "That's me."

"Can I tell you something?"

Angela stilled her finger and looked back to Fareeha. "What is it?"

"That political advisor of yours is very hard headed." Angela giggled at that. "But, he does tend to agree with me so I let it slide."

"I'll make sure to commemorate him on a job well done."

Fareeha seemed to have more questions but she didn't pry. "I'm glad you found the time to take a vacation."

"Yes well, you can say it was much needed." A look flickered across her face but she quickly hid it away. She wanted to have a good time with Fareeha. She didn't want to bring the mood down with her current predicament. Smiling again she spoke. "I seem to find myself in good company."

"Just good?" Fareeha looked taken aback. "I'll have to fix that. You should know that I am excellent company."

"We'll see about that."

"Well we can start testing my claims now. We're here."

Fareeha parked the car on a moderately busy street. She quickly got out and ran around the other side to open the door for Angela. Angela smiled at her obvious effort and reached for Fareeha's arm. They walked by an assortment of vendor stalls. Some jewelry, some clothing, and most of them food.

"Where are we?" asked Angela.

"We are in the Alexandria region." She seemed to be searching for something.

When they walked by a clothing vender, Angela found herself being led back to it. Fareeha began talking to the man that owned the stall in their native language. It sounded so nice coming from Fareeha. The man handed her a beautifully weaved hat and a white scarf with blue exotic flower designs. Fareeha paid for the items and they started walking down a worn path.

Holding the hat and the scarf out to Angela, Fareeha spoke. "These are for you. I don't want you to burn." As they kept walking, the sounds of wind and water could be heard.

They reached the end of the path when Angela accepted the items. "Thank you. I hadn't thought about the sun." They ended up having to walk through a line of trees. On the other side was endless sand and water that stretched out forever.

Angela turned towards Fareeha with the biggest smile on her face. "Is this the beach? I've never been to one before." She looked so excited. "I mean, I've read about them but I've never been."

The ocean breeze shook through her hair and she seemed to get even more excited. Quickly putting on the hat and wrapping the scarf around her shoulders, she grabbed Fareeha's arm again and started pulling them towards the water.

When they got to the wet sand Fareeha stopped and untangled her arm from Angela's grip. She bent down and got to work taking off her boots. Angela did the same with her sandals while the taller woman rolled her pants up to just above her calves. The blonde found herself staring at the sight. She suddenly wanted to see more of those legs.

Angela snapped out of it when Fareeha offered her arm again. They walked along the shore aimlessly. The cool water felt good on Angela's feet and she enjoyed the ocean wind. Especially the way it made Fareeha's hair flow behind her, beads softly sounding together. The sun highlighted Fareeha's skin and Angela found her heart beat increasing. Bringing her scarf tighter to her body, Angela increased her grip on Fareeha's arm.

They continued down the shoreline until Angela had a wicked thought. She stepped deeper into the water until it hit the middle of her calves. Then she stopped. She untangled their arms and stepped closer to Fareeha. Moving slowly she carefully positioned a foot behind Fareeha's heel. She looked up to her face and beckoned for her to bend down to her level.

Fareeha was getting more and more flustered the closer Angela got. And then the blonde whispered in her ear, "Got you," and pushed the taller woman back. Fareeha started going backwards and tripped on Angela's carefully placed foot. Not going down alone, Fareeha made a grab for Angela's hand and pulled her down with her. The blonde held onto her hat for dear life and let out a shriek just before hitting the water.

When they emerged from the salty water, Fareeha's laughter sounded so full and genuine. Angela couldn't get enough of the sound. "Hana's going to be so jealous. She's been trying to dunk me in the water for years now." She started to get up and gathered their wet shoes, and Angela's wet hat and scarf. She ran back to the sand, dropped the bundled items in the sand and ran back in the water.

In her excitement, Fareeha tripped into the water right beside where Angela was sitting. When she came up, her hair was covering most of her face. Angela giggled and automatically went to clear away her face. Her hands tingled at the feel of Fareeha's smooth skin and she found herself biting down a smile and trying to keep down a blush.

Angela's eye flickered down to even softer looking lips as she continued to trace random patterns along Fareeha's jawline. Her heart stopped at the thought. Trying to keep herself busy, she tucked some of her hair behind an ear and started to swirl the water with her fingers.

Suddenly a splash of water hit her face. She looked up incredulously in time to see Fareeha do it again. "You...you splashed me!"

"You seemed lost so I thought some water might help to clear your mind." She smirked and gave Angela that 'I know what you were thinking' look. "Just trying to offer my help."

Angela caught on and gave a shy smile. Fareeha seemed to get an idea and spoke again. "Do you know how to float?" Angela nodded yes and Fareeha continued. "The best way to float in the ocean is with the waves." She demonstrated by floating her body with her feet facing the shore.

Fareeha extended a hand and Angela took it. They waded deeper into the water until they were halfway submerged. "You try."

When Fareeha let go of her hand, Angela followed her earlier example and floated with the ocean

waves. The waves were gentle and the constant motion was relaxing. She closed her eyes and let the experience wash over her. She felt a hand in hers and peeked an eye open to see Fareeha doing the same as her. Closing her eye again, Angela gave their hands a squeeze and the two of them simply floated together in the calming waves.

After what seemed like a blissful eternity, the two of them stood back up again and waded back to shore. They had drifted a bit but managed to find their things. Taking in the state of their wet clothing Angela had a tiny bit of regret. But only a bit.

Fareeha seemed to know what was going through her mind. She pointed towards some rocks. "We can dry off over there."

As they neared the rocks, the ocean wind seemed to intensify. Fareeha climbed up first and then helped Angela up. They sat down on the smoothest section and set their shoes out to dry. Fareeha unrolled her pants and laid down on the rocks, letting out a pleased sigh.

Angela followed suit after shaking out as much sand as she could from her hat and scarf. Once she was laying down on her side, she covered the sun exposed side of her face with the hat and covered her arms with the damp scarf. She tucked her legs into her dress and was satisfied that she wouldn't get burned to a crisp.

Fareeha turned on her side to face Angela and they just quietly observed each other. Angela poked a hand out from under her scarf and reached out towards Fareeha's hand. She brought their hands in the middle and started idly playing with her fingers.

After a while Fareeha's fingers went still. Angela peaked up and noticed her soft breathing and closed eyes. Shifting her scarf over, Angela covered Fareeha's arms and hummed a soft tune to herself. She was too invested in the moment to fall asleep, so she just busied herself by reliving the events of the day as Fareeha slept.

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When Fareeha woke up, she heard a soft humming. It sounded nice so she kept her eyes closed for a little while longer. After some time, it stopped all of a sudden. "I know you're awake."

Fareeha opened her eyes and looked at the woman feigning a disappointed look. She noticed that Angela's scarf was covering them both and blushed at the thought. Turning to lay on her back Fareeha said, "I liked your humming. It was nice."

"Ah- thank you." She started to sit up when a loud rumbling erupted from her stomach.

Fareeha sat up as well. "Let's go eat. I wouldn't want you to starve." She stretched a bit and ran a hand through her hair. She felt around her hair a bit more and noticed it was sticking up in different directions. "My hair's a mess though."

Angela reached out and smoothed down the more stubborn strands of hair. The salt water made her hair feel a bit rougher but she could tell that it was normally soft. *Maybe some other time I can test that theory out.* When she pulled back, Fareeha's hair still looked a little mussed but she thought it was cute that way. "It's perfect now."

They put on their dried shoes and climbed down the rocks. Crossing the sand, Angela turned towards the water to look at the setting sun shining over the rippling waves as she walked with Fareeha.

Once back on the street, Angela insisted that they get their food from one of the food stalls rather than sitting in a restaurant. The doctor dragged Fareeha to several different stalls saying that they

had to get something from each. By the time they were done, Fareeha was carrying all sorts of wrapped up foods as Angela quietly snacked on whatever she pleased.

Once back at the car, Fareeha motioned for them to sit on the hood of the car. They sat knees touching as they ate a picnic style dinner illuminated by a nearby lamppost. When night fully settled in, Fareeha started shivering.

Angela looked like she figured something out. “You’re cold. That’s why you brought the jacket. It’s because you get cold at night.”

The shivering woman gave a small frown. “Well, not exactly.”

That’s when it clicked. “You thought *I* would get cold. Fareeha, I lived in Switzerland all my life. Cold is practically my middle name. Besides, someone bought me this nice scarf. It keeps off the chill.”

Fareeha slid off the hood of the car. “Since you’re not going to use it...” She unlocked the door and reached inside for her jacket. She put it on and felt instant relief.

Angela liked the jacket. She *really* liked it. Sliding off the hood as well, she crossed over to Fareeha and took hold of the jacket with both hands. Fareeha’s flustered appearance made her chuckle. “This is a really nice jacket you know.” She pulled the other woman down slightly and placed a lingering kiss on her cheek. “Thank you for today. It really was wonderful. One might say I had excellent company.” Letting go of the jacket, she went to the other of the car and climbed in.

It took Fareeha a while to also get in the car. When she did, she saw Angela wrapped in her scarf with a sleepy smile on her face. “It’s okay to sleep. It’s a long way back anyway.” Angela nodded in agreement and no longer tried to fight her exhaustion.

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When Fareeha arrived back at the home, it was late at night. Angela was still sleeping and showed no signs of waking up. She got out of the car and went to the passenger side. Opening the door, she carefully pulled the doctor into her arms. She took care not to jostle her too much and walked them both to the home. When she arrived at the front door, Ana was already sitting outside with a cup of tea in hand.

”I take it you had a good day?” She motioned to the sleeping doctor.

Fareeha smiled down at the woman in her arms. “It was perfect. She’s... It was perfect.” She looked back to her mother. The older woman looked so happy.

”That’s good.” She stood up and opened the door for them. “I’ll let you get her to bed.”

As she was passing her mother, she bent down and kissed her goodnight. “Good night mother.”

”Good night Fareeha.”

# Four

## Chapter Summary

A friend disappears, meetings don't go as planned, memories of the past, and picnics don't go as planned.

## Chapter Notes

This one is a bit of a ride. I hope you guys like how long my chapters are. I'm not one for writing short ones but I feel they could be longer?

Two days had passed since the incident and Tracer was feeling much better. She hadn't experienced any abnormalities with her accelerator and she planned to keep it that way. That's not to say she didn't get nervous every time the blue light on her chest so much as blipped.

To help reassure herself that nothing was going to happen, Tracer refrained from going on any missions. Instead she kept busy by keeping herself in motion. She would walk the compound ten times over in the morning and practice her aim in the shooting range for endless hours. She even surprisingly took to cleaning. Of all the people on base, Hana and Jesse were always sure to make a big mess where ever they went. Tracer found herself actually looking forward to finding their messes lying around. It gave her something to do. Something to focus on.

Just the act of touching something made her feel more grounded in the world she knew so well. Feeling the solid ground beneath her feet and knowing each step reiterated that she was still there became her lifeline.

And then there were her friends. Fareeha and Angela silently understood her need to sit so close to them. Whenever one of them would be sitting on the couch, they'd pat the cushion next to them, extending an invitation for their friend to get closer. Ana was happy to throw an arm around the woman and talk her head off with stories of her time as a young woman. Tracer didn't know if the older woman knew about what happened, knowing Ana she probably did, but she appreciated the extra attention non-the-less.

She was standing in the kitchen making herself some lunch. She settled for a simple ham and cheese sandwich. Didn't want to be standing around for long. Just as she went for the first bite, Winston came in looking relieved.

"There you are. I had a feeling I'd find you here.

Mouth full of sandwich, Tracer answered between bites. "Did you need something?"

"Athena and I were working non-stop on your new accelerator and it's finished." He straightened up some more. "I know how much you wanted to get this done so, if you want, we could head over to my lab right now and install it."

She nearly dropped her sandwich. Rushing up to her friend, she gave him a quick hug and started

leading the way to his lab. “No use standing around! Let’s get going.”

They were nearly there when Tracer noticed Angela and Fareeha standing outside the door to Winston’s lab. They looked like they were in their own world. Angela was playing with the Egyptian’s hands and Fareeha was looking warmly at the doctor.

”Hey loves! Are you here for support?”

Angela stilled her movement and when she turned towards Tracer, it looked like she was trying to calm her big smile. “You could say that. I’m here to assist Winston.” Looking up at her girlfriend her smile automatically grew. “Fareeha is here for support.”

The woman in reference rubbed the back of her neck at the mention of her support role. “If you don’t mind that is.”

Tracer smiled at her friend’s concern. “Of course not!”

When they all entered the room, Winston headed over to one of his workbenches and wheeled it over to the temporary examination bed set up. “This shouldn’t take long. Ah, take a seat. Everything will be set up soon.” Pushing up his glasses he went to work setting up the new accelerator.

Tracer hopped up on the bed and stared at her new accelerator. It wasn’t lit up yet. *I wonder if it’ll still be blue.* She looked down at her current accelerator and noticed a brief flicker of light. Her worried eyes looked away and locked onto Fareeha’s. The other woman noticed her distress.

She walked up to Tracer and took hold of her hand. “Don’t worry. It’s going to be okay.”

Tracer nodded at that and went back to look at Winston’s progress. The new accelerator was glowing blue like her own. He looked quite pleased with himself. “Alright Lena, we’re going to start soon.”

She nodded but continued to stare at the blue light. There was a feeling she couldn’t shake. As Winston wheeled the workbench closer to her, the feeling grew in intensity. That’s when the light started to blink. It was a slow rhythmic pattern of blue light fading in and out. Lena looked down and saw that her accelerator was mimicking the pattern. “Uh...Winston. I think...”

Everyone in the room seemed to catch on, Mercy spoke up first. “What’s happening?”

The two lights shone intensely and then seemed to drop out altogether. Pharah’s hand felt empty. She looked around to no avail. Her friend was gone. Nothing but cold silence filled the room.

-

Fareeha spent the whole day in various meetings. It was really more like a never ending argument repeating itself over and over, taking several breaks in between. They were trying to convince her of something or whatnot but her mind wasn’t really into it. Sure, she knew what they were trying to get her to agree to but after looking over their proposals, she already decided to give them a solid ‘no’. Of course, she had to let them argue it out first. It was only the proper thing to do.

In the midst of it all, Fareeha couldn’t keep her mind off a certain blonde doctor. *She’s just so...* It was two days after their trip to the beach. During that time they got to know each other a little more. She smiled at the thought. The more she got to know Angela, the more there was to admire.

Fareeha learned that Angela had an eye for the human form and could replicate it with ease. The couple of drawings that she showed Fareeha were of Ana, Hana, and a some of the guards that

could be seen walking around.

*"What about me?"*

*Angela seemed like she was struck by lightning. "Ah well, you see..." The blonde hid something behind her back. She seemed to be frantically thinking of something to say. "I... I need to capture the right mood." She seemed satisfied with her answer and went back to sketching a smiling Hana.*

She also learned that the doctor much preferred coffee over tea.

*Angela turned to Fareeha after admitting her secret. She gave her a stern glance. "Don't tell your mother that though. I don't think she'd find it very amusing. She'd probably try something drastic."*

The following morning after Angela's revelation, Fareeha brought Angela into the kitchen after breakfast.

*With a cup in her hand, the taller woman walked over to Angela and offered the mug to her. "Here. I made it special."*

*Blue eyes lit up when she took the offered cup and saw its contents. Angela took a sip and her lips slowly started to curl up, almost like she was holding back a smile. "It's good."*

She learned that Angela liked to play with her hands.

*"Am I bothering you?" the blonde let go of Fareeha's hands and suddenly looked guilty. "I never asked if you were okay with me doing that."*

*Fareeha placed her hands back within Angela's. "No, not at all." A streak of red was forming along her cheeks. "I like it."*

*Angela went back to her previous task of mingling their fingers together. "That's a relief." She stilled her hands for just a moment. "I like it too."*

Fareeha was brought out of her thoughts when the room suddenly quieted down. Her policy-makers were looking at her expectantly. Looking back down at the written proposal before her, she took a second to mentally skim through the arguments she may or may not have been listening to. Satisfied that no new information seemed to stand out, she looked back towards the politicians.

*"I have all that I need. You'll have my answer tomorrow. I'll send correspondence."*

When no one spoke up she dismissed the meeting. She watched as everyone started to shuffle out. They seemed tired. *It did seem like things got heated in here.* The retired captain looked at the papers in front of her one last time. She felt guilty for not paying attention like she usually would but she did read the proposal over multiple times. *I'll read it again just in case.*

Getting up from her seat, Fareeha tucked the papers away in a folder and headed outside. It was midafternoon and she was itching to get home.

-

Hana was sitting at a table on the balcony. She was waiting for Fareeha to come home so they could practice some more. Her hand to hand training was going well and she looked forward to keeping up her progress. The girl currently had a chess set in front of her. Her opponent: herself. She still wasn't good enough to beat her grandmother but Hana wasn't a quitter. She had set up

the game so that it resembled the latest match she lost against Ana.

After getting stuck a few times, Hana decided to take a break. Looking out towards the river she felt a sense of calm. Her eyes drifted towards the two women sitting in the garden drinking tea and laughing about something. She watched as her grandmother leaned into Angela's ear and seemed to make the doctor visibly flustered. *I wonder what they're talking about.* Ana seemed to get more animated and she could see Angela's red face from where she sat. *They're probably talking about mama.*

Hana was happy that Fareeha and Angela seemed to be hitting it off. She wanted so badly for her mama to be happy. She looked down at her hands and bits of memory started to flood her mind. *Especially since she never gave up on me.*

She remembered eight years ago. She remembered her parents hastily packing their bags and heading for some boats. The menacing giant ships that blocked the harbors, lighting the bay on fire. There was running. Her smaller hands were clutched to her father's shirt. The people behind them suddenly falling.

The car rides were endless. Her mother would sit in the back and play word games with her. She could recall the masked panic in her mother's face as she tried to keep everything held together. Then there wasn't a car anymore.

There was walking. Her feet ached and the blisters would start to bleed. At night, they'd find others to spend the night with. Her father told her to always hold onto her bag. One morning it was gone.

The sounds of fighting was always in the background. She couldn't hear it when they got on a boat. When they got off though, it was just like everywhere else. Her father would sing to her and tell her funny stories. She liked those.

It was unbearably hot. They found a camp that promised to keep them safe. For a while it seemed like everything was alright. She got a new bag, her feet no longer ached, and they gave her as much food as she wanted. Her parents always looked tired but they would still play with her. She remembered the three of them dancing on a cool moonlit night.

There was fire everywhere. Her parents held on to her tightly. A soldier found them and then suddenly they weren't holding on as tight. She remembered looking into the eyes of a man. A gun aimed straight for her. His hand was shaking. She closed her eyes.

A loud shot echoed throughout the hallway she was in. When she opened her eyes, the man was on the ground and a woman had a hand extended towards her. She remembered the woman. She was one of the soldiers in the camp. The tears wouldn't stop as the sight of her parents lifeless on the ground grew farther and farther away. The soldier had carried her for hours. Her steps were strong, her body never slowing down.

She stayed in a home with other kids for two years. She'd play with the others but would hide away whenever an adult came to spend time with her. She didn't want to get adopted. She already had parents, she didn't need any more.

One day, the soldier came to visit her. She was playing a board game by herself when the woman sat across from her. She looked up at the woman and noticed she looked nervous. She went back to playing her game. After a while of just sitting there, the woman spoke up. *"Can I play?"*

She looked back to the woman and seemed to think about something. Getting up from the table, she headed for her room and just left the soldier sitting there.

The soldier came back the next day. And the day after that. She found that the woman wasn't going to give up. The soldier would quietly read a book or tell her a story about anything that came to mind. One day she finally relented.

The next time the soldier came to visit, Hana went to her room and came back with a board game. Setting it down at the table the woman sat, she opened it up and set up the game. *"You can play."*

So they played. In the middle of the game, the soldier stopped and looked up at her. *"What's your name? Mine's Fareeha."*

*"Hana."*

They'd play together every time the soldier came to visit. She found herself looking forward to the visits. One day, during a game, Fareeha looked especially nervous. *"Hana..."*

She looked up at the mention of her name. *"How would you feel about coming to live with me?"*

She dropped her piece but quickly went to retrieve it. Her nerves felt a sudden shock and an unpleasant buzz started to travel throughout her body. Her head started to feel a mixture of cold and strained agony. She fought every instinct in her that told her to run. Trying to keep her voice from shaking she placed her fisted hand on the table. *"I already had a mama, I don't need another."*

The soldier seemed to contemplate her next words. *"I...I don't have any intention of replacing her. It's just...I feel that there's a connection here. Two years ago, when I found you in that building and after I brought you here," she took a shaky breath and continued, "I went back to the battlefield with a sense of knowing. I knew what my place in the war was. I was meant to protect." Her face looked pained. "I had a city to protect and thinking of you reminded me why. There was so much I wasn't able to do. There were so many I was not able to protect but thinking of you made all my efforts seem worthwhile."*

She looked up into the sincerity of the soldier's eyes. The woman looked so vulnerable. It was nothing like the strong face she remembered two years ago, pulling her up from the blood soaked floor and holding onto her with sturdy arms. Looking at the game piece she held in her hand, she took a long while to consider the offer. When she looked back up, the woman seemed even more nervous.

Putting the piece back on the board she continued the game. Fareeha didn't question it and continued to play as well. She paused for just a moment. *"Okay."*

Hana looked back to her forgotten chess game. "I still gave her a hard time after that," she said quietly to herself. Picking up where she left off, Hana pondered her next move.

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When Fareeha got home, she found that Hana was playing chess by herself. She leaned into the doorway and watched for a while. "Practicing?"

Hana didn't seem fazed and after carefully placing a piece, she looked towards the doorway. "I have to if I want to beat nana." She started to get up and placed another piece on the board. "Now that you're here though, this can wait."

"I'll meet you downstairs then." She backed up from the doorway and headed downstairs toward the garden. When she got to the entryway, Angela and her mother were there as well.

The doctor seemed pleased to find her. "Fareeha! You're back." The woman was holding onto a

pencil and a folder filled with paper. "Did everything go well?"

Fareeha started to rub her neck at the memory of today's meeting. "As well as it could I suppose." Her guilt started to show on her face. "I must confess that my mind was elsewhere."

Her mother seemed to pick up on what 'elsewhere' meant. "Just don't bring down the whole city because you decided to daydream about Angela."

Angela had a sly smile on her face. "Is that really what had you distracted?"

"Well, y-you see..." She struggled to find her words. "You may have popped up in a thought or two."

"More like all of them!" Her mother laughed and gave her a hardy pat on the back. She gave Angela a wink. "It's okay to like her you know." She gestured towards the blonde and Angela steadfastly agreed with a series of nods. "That just means the wedding will be soon!"

Fareeha smiled at her mother's enthusiasm. "Of course."

"There are some things I need to take care of so I'll leave you two be." Ana gave her daughter another pat and walked inside.

Angela still seemed very happy to see her. She brushed a strand of hair behind her ear and looked at Fareeha with sparkling eyes. "Are you busy right now?"

"I'm actually waiting for Hana. We're going to spar in a bit. She's actually learning very quickly."

Angela didn't seem dismayed by her response. She clutched the folder closer to her chest and seemed to have a slight blush. "Can I watch?"

"Of course."

"I'll go get my hat and scarf then. You two will probably be out in the sun."

Fareeha smiled at Angela's continued use of her gifts. "Yeah, there's not much shade out there."

-

When Hana finally came down, having changed into a more suitable outfit, they both headed out towards the training area. Once there, they started off with a series of stretches. Hana used to complain about how time consuming it was until she pulled a muscle. She never complained after that.

By the time the two of them started their session, Angela had arrived. She had spread a blanket out on the ground and started to sketch the two of them. Her hat was doing a good job of blocking the sun from her eyes and her scarf kept her shoulders safe from burns.

After a while of sketching the pair, Angela found herself just staring. By this point, Fareeha had gotten very sweaty. Her clothes were sticking to her and Angela could see her muscles strain with effort. Angela started thinking some thoughts and slowly reached out for her pencil and paper. Focusing exclusively on Fareeha, she began to sketch the woman in vivid detail. She was captivating and this piece would make an excellent addition to her already growing collection she had hidden in a drawer.

In the middle of the third Fareeha sketch for the day, Ana had silently walked up to the concentrated doctor and peered over her shoulder. "I'm sure she'd be very flattered to see those

you know.”

Angela let out a tiny screech and hugged the drawings close to her chest. “Ana! I-I didn’t see you.”

”Of course. I was being intentionally sneaky.”

Angela buried her face between her knees. “You saw them.”

”That I did.”

”And you’re going to tell her aren’t you?”

”Someone has to move things along. I mean, it’s great that you two are getting along and everything but I have yet to hear any wedding music.”

The blonde looked up at the older woman. “Ana, it’s only been a few days.”

“Your point being?”

”These things take time.”

”Just sounds like an excuse to me.”

”Technically it is, but that’s besides the point.”

”The point you have yet to make.”

Taking mercy on the doctor, Ana presented the basket she was holding to her. “I made a picnic lunch.” She took a seat on the blanket and began to unpack the basket. She pulled out a smaller basket of bread, a roasted vegetable salad, various cut up fruit, and little pastries of some sort.

Angela seemed to have gotten over her embarrassment and put her drawings away. Ana handed her a plate and encouraged the woman to have as much as she wanted. “I’d take a pastry now. There might not be any left once Hana gets to them.”

As soon as Angela reached out for a pastry, Hana came running towards them. She stopped right at the edge of the blanket and quickly sat down nearest the food. Ana handed the girl a plate and she got to work filling it up. Half of it was filled with the bread covered in salad and the other half was pure pastry. She only left one behind.

Ana seemed pleased that the girl was enjoying herself. “Eat up now, you’ve been practicing hard.”

Hana nodded at that and began to dig in.

When Fareeha arrived, Angela tried her best not to stare. She failed miserably. The woman sat right next to her and she had a close-up view of the shimmering muscles of her arms, curtesy of the sleeveless shirt she wore. The way the hair stuck to Fareeha’s heat ridden face was lovely to look at. When she glanced over at Angela, the doctor couldn’t help but stare as bead of sweat traveled from her jawline, down her neck, and disappeared into the front of her shirt.

When Ana handed Fareeha a plate, the older woman gave Angela a knowing look. The doctor blushed at her obvious admiration.

The wind started to pick up and the breeze served to calm Fareeha’s red face. She seemed more spirited after eating a bit of food. “I saw that you were sketching something, could I see?”

Ana piped in too. "Yes, Angela. You should show her what you drew."

Angela gave Ana a pointed glare but reached for her folder none-the-less. She took out her drawings of Hana and Fareeha sparring and handed them over. Fareeha put her plate down to examine the pieces.

"I take it you found the right mood to draw me then. These look nice."

"Yes well, it was a great mood." She glanced over at Ana and saw the devilish smirk on her face.

"She has more you know. Of you that is. I saw them before I sat down. They're really quite good." Angela was glaring daggers at her but the older woman ignored them.

Fareeha turned back to Angela. "Really? Can I see those too?"

There was a part of her that was really embarrassed at being caught but there was another part that was interested in how Fareeha would react. Mentally preparing herself, Angela reached for her folder again and took out the other drawings she was working on. She handed them to Fareeha.

Fareeha took much more time examining these drawings. She could tell that there was more effort involved and what was actually drawn made her blush. The first drawing was a full body pose of herself. Her soaked shirt was drawn highlighting the muscles of her abdomen. She could see the strain in her arms and the intense look on her face was so detailed.

The next drawing was a back view of herself. Her back muscles were prominently on display and part of her shirt had ridden up to expose her side. The her exposed skin was glistening.

The last drawing was a close-up of the bottom half of her face. Her right shoulder was in the drawing as well but there was extra attention spent on her facial features. She shaded in the extra color in her face from the heat and made sure to capture the beads of sweat running down the side of her jaw. Then there were her lips. It seemed that Angela put the extra effort to make them shimmer. Even with the cool breeze, her face began to heat up more the longer she stared at that drawing.

She noticed that she was taking a while to say anything so she quickly gathered her thoughts to come up with something to say. "I have to say Angela, you are very gifted. The level of detail is incredible. I-I'm very flattered."

Angela could see Ana giving her those 'told you so' eyes. She noticed the visible blush on Fareeha's face so she didn't mind Ana's teasing this time around. "Thank you Fareeha. I'm glad you think so."

They continued to eat once Angela put her drawings away. She finished her bread and salad mixture and tried the pastry she grabbed earlier. It was fruit filled with a crunchy exterior. She found herself devouring the whole thing. She wanted more. Eyeing the last pastry, she made to reach out for it. Just as her hand touched the pastry, so did Fareeha's.

Fareeha looked over to Hana and her plate of pastries. The girl caught on and gave her mother a shake of her head no. She looked back at Angela and found the other woman giving her a pleading look. The blues eyes shimmered in the light and she found herself letting go of the pastry.

Angela seemed happy with the outcome and began to eat her prize. In the middle of eating, she paused to think. Making a decision, she pulled a piece from her pastry and extended it to Fareeha. "So, you can have some."

Fareeha looked at the extended piece and was trying to figure out her approach. It really was a small piece but she appreciated the thought. She could just take the offered piece with her hand but...that's when she just went for it. Leaning down towards the blonde's fingers, she took the piece into her mouth. As she leaned back away from her hand, she felt fingers lightly brush her lips. The doctor looked stunned.

Fareeha gave her a smirk. "Thank you."

"Y-you're welcome."

The wind really picked up and Angela was too stunned to notice that her hat was threatening to fly away. As the wind intensified, her hat went with it. Shocked, Angela watched as the hat flew away and got swept along with the wind. She tried to reach out for it but it was too high up. The hat traveled higher and higher until it finally got stuck on the roof.

Without hesitation, Fareeha said, "I'll get it."

She ran towards the home and Angela called out to her. "Please be careful."

Hat retrieving must have been a specialty because the taller woman seemed to not have any problems scaling the home to reach the roof. She took careful steps and slowly reached out for the hat. When she grabbed hold of it, Fareeha slowly made her way back down. She was more than halfway down when her pants got stuck. In her effort to get the fabric free, Fareeha lost her grip and fell the rest of the way down.

Upon impact with the ground, her head hit first. Then her body was lurched a bit forward and her head collided with the ground for a second time. The woman made no motion to get up.

Worried, Angela ran as fast as she could towards Fareeha, the others close behind her. When she reached the woman, she gently examined her head. She found no bleeding but the impact with the ground was what really concerned her. "Fareeha, can you hear me? I need you to try and focus." Putting some fingers and front on her eyes she asked, "Can you see my fingers? If you can, how many are there?"

Fareeha could hear someone speaking. What they were saying was a bit harder to figure out. When she opened her eyes, she could see something but her vision was blurry and unfocused. What she did know was that her head hurt, a lot. The sun in her eyes was irritating and she felt herself growing tired. So she closed her eyes again. She felt herself drifting off. Next thing she knew someone was shaking her awake.

This was worrying for Angela. Fareeha definitely had at least a concussion. She noticed the woman trying to sleep so she shook her awake. Turning towards Hana, she began to lay out some instructions. "We are going to move her. It has to be gentle though. Her head took a really hard blow and any sudden movement can make it worse." Looking back towards Ana, she spoke again. "Ana, can you lead the way to Fareeha's room? I think it would be best if she got comfortable there."

"Of course."

Once Hana and Angela got ahold of Fareeha, they gently lifted her up and supported the woman with their shoulders. Fareeha seemed to gain enough sense that she knew to walk. With Ana leading the way, they moved slowly towards the woman's room. Ana made sure there was nothing impeding them and opened any doors blocking their path. When they reached her room, Angela and Hana made a move towards the bed.

Fareeha noticed and steadfastly refused. "No."

Angela sighed. *Now she decides to be stubborn.* "I need you to lie still for a while."

After Fareeha reiterated her refusal, Ana seemed to understand why. "It's okay Angela, I know why she doesn't want to. She still hasn't bathed yet."

"She can change the sheets later."

Ana smiled at how worried Angela was. "She won't be comfortable." Shifting over to where Hana was supporting Fareeha, she had the girl switch places with her. "Don't worry, I'll make sure she doesn't move her head much."

By now, Fareeha was nodding her head at her mother's words.

Angela seemed reluctant to let go but she relented. "Call for me if anything looks remotely wrong." Letting Ana fully support Fareeha, she moved away from the woman.

"I will."

When they got inside the bathroom, Ana started the water. Once the tub was filled, she helped her daughter out of her clothes and into the bath. Fareeha looked more focused and began to clean herself. When it came time to wash her hair, Ana stopped her and did it for her. "Knowing you, you'll probably shake your head every which way."

"Thank you mama," mumbled Fareeha.

Ana paused. She hadn't been called that in years. Stilling her shaking hands, she resumed washing her daughter's hair.

When Fareeha was finished bathing, Ana helped her out of the tub and into a bathrobe. She grabbed a towel and gently ran it over her daughter's hair. When the excess water was absorbed, she started leading them out of the bathroom and over to the bed. Angela and Hana were already sitting on it talking to each other. When they noticed the bathroom door had opened, they stopped their conversation and Angela quickly stood up.

"She didn't move her head much did she?"

"No, I made sure she didn't." When they reached the bed, Fareeha started to climb on top of it and Ana gently lowered her head onto the pillow.

Angela took a seat beside the injured woman. "I need to observe her for a while to make sure nothing else is wrong."

Hana leaned over to look at a dazed Fareeha. "Are you going to be okay mama?"

Fareeha reached out a hand gently squeezed Hana's. "I'll be okay."

Hana still seemed a little worried. "Promise?"

"Promise."

Ana wanted to let the doctor work so she motioned for Hana to follow her. "Come on Hana, let's leave them be. We can have another go at chess if you want."

The girl was reluctant to leave but she relented. "Okay." Leaning over to give Fareeha a kiss on the cheek, Hana got off the bed and left with Ana.

Angela watched as the other two left. When she looked back, she noticed Fareeha trying to go to sleep. She gently tapped at her cheek to keep her awake. "Can't have you sleeping yet."

The tired woman opened her eyes again. "When can I sleep?"

"Maybe in four hours." She took one of Fareeha's hands and started to play with her fingers. "Until then you have to stay awake. Doctor's orders."

Fareeha seemed to ponder the information. She squeezed their hands together absentmindedly in thought. "Okay."

During the four-hour observation, Angela would check Fareeha's pupils and ask her questions regarding her sight, feeling, and hearing. She'd ask about any pain or discomfort as well.

Fareeha would try her best to answer the questions but then she just started complimenting the doctor in response.

"Does your vision look spotty anymore?"

Fareeha smiled. "Did I ever tell you that I like your eyes?"

"Ah, no. I don't think you have."

"Well, they're very beautiful."

Angela placed a finger in front of Fareeha's eyes. "Can you follow my finger with your eyes?"

Fareeha followed for a bit but then reached out for the doctor's hand. "Did I ever tell you that your hands are very soft?"

Angela was starting to blush now. "This would be a first." Pulling back her hand, she reached down and pinched Fareeha's leg. "Can you feel that?"

Fareeha reached for the hand again. Bringing it up to her chin she looked the doctor in the eyes. "Can you feel this?" She lifted the hand to her lips and placed a kiss to her knuckles.

Angela was blushing furiously by now. She covered her face with her unoccupied hand as Fareeha placed another kiss on her hand. When she looked back down to the woman she saw Fareeha giving her the sweetest smile.

"Thank you for taking care of me doctor."

"Of course." Angela took out her pocket watch and saw that four hours had already passed. "Time's up. I can officially say that tonight, you are not going to die."

"That's a relief."

"You can also go to sleep now."

Fareeha frowned a tiny bit. "I'm wide awake now."

Angela looked amused. "You need to rest."

"Doctor's orders?"

"Yes, doctor's orders."

Fareeha closed her eyes for a couple of seconds and opened them back up again. "Seems to not be working."

Angela sighed and scooted over so that she was laying beside Fareeha. She lifted a hand and began to caress her dark silky hair. It felt so smooth beneath her fingers that she found herself wanting to do it some more. Shifting her hand to the other side of Fareeha's head, she began to run her fingers along the hair there. She shifted closer so that she was right beside her ear and began to hum an old melody.

Before long, Fareeha had fallen asleep. The doctor stayed with her for little bit longer. She enjoyed was enjoying the moment and, truth be told, she didn't want it to end. Reluctantly, she got up on one elbow and looked at the sleeping woman a while longer. Angela slowly climbed off the bed and went to cover the woman with a blanket.

She stepped away from the bed and headed towards the door. Glancing back at Fareeha she whispered, "Goodnight," and silently left the room.

When Angela left Fareeha's room, she made a stop by the kitchen to drink some water. She filled an empty cup and leaned against the counter to drink it. She looked at the hand Fareeha kissed and could still feel the ghost of soft lips against her skin. The thought made her skin tingle in sensation. Placing the empty cup next to the sink, she left the kitchen and headed towards her room.

When she arrived, she noticed Ana leaning against the doorframe. She was holding onto her hat. Ana extended the hat to Angela. "Here, since she went through all the trouble."

Angela took the offered hat. "Thank you Ana."

There was a moment of silence. Ana seemed to be examining her. "Tell me Angela. Do you like my daughter?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you see yourself loving her?"

She took a moment to respond.

"Yes. I don't think I could stop that from happening."

Ana seemed to soften at that. She walked up to Angela and engulfed her in a hug. When she pulled back, Angela could see the tears threatening to spill from her eye. "That's good." She went in for another hug and then fully pulled away. "Good night Angela. Thank you for today."

"Good night Ana." She watched as the older woman disappeared into the hall.

# Five

## Chapter Summary

Fareeha really should be resting, Tracer does some detective work, Angela and Hana spend some time together, did I mention Fareeha really should be resting?, and another target.

## Chapter Notes

Oh boy. There's some things in here.

Fareeha woke up the next morning with a raging headache. Running her fingers through her hair she tried to recall all that happened yesterday. There was the meeting. She remembered being with Hana and the picnic afterwards. Then there was Angela and her sweet smile and sparkling eyes.

She remembered falling.

Reaching for the back of her head, she quickly retracted her hand when she felt the sting from brushing over the sensitive area. Wincing, Fareeha took the covers off herself and noticed she was in a bathrobe. When she tried to sit up, a rush of dizzying pain filled her skull. She tried sitting up again but much slower this time. The pain in her head was all consuming. Resting her face in her palms, she tried to conjure up the remaining memories of the night.

All she could remember was a faint melody and the ghost of a touch caressing her scalp. She shivered at the sensation, the headache slightly alleviated at the thought. *I have to get up.* Carefully, she lowered her feet onto the ground and straightened up to a standing position. The light coming from her window was bothersome so she slowly made her way over to pull the curtains shut.

Fareeha headed towards her wardrobe and got dressed for the day. She still needed to send correspondence about yesterday's proposal and there was yet another meeting to attend. After she finished tying her shoes, Fareeha walked out of her room and towards the dining room. She was starving.

When she arrived at the dining room, she noticed that everyone seemed to almost be done eating. When Angela noticed her arrival, the woman put down her cup of tea and quickly stood up from her seat.

"Fareeha. I was just going to bring you breakfast. You shouldn't be up you know." The blonde examined her meticulously and started to frown a bit. "You're dressed for work."

The taller woman seemed confused. "Yes?"

Angela's frown seemed to deepen. "You're in no condition to do anything but rest."

Fareeha still seemed puzzled. "I mean, I'm feeling a little off but I'm sure I'll be fine."

Angela beckoned the stubborn woman to lean down towards her. She reached behind the taller woman's head and pressed on the sensitive area. Fareeha reeled away from the touch. "You feel that? The giant headache I have no doubt that you have? The feeling of your brain bouncing around in your skull? I bet you're feeling dizzy. You're squinting too. A sensitivity to light."

Fareeha peeked an eye behind the upset woman and could see her mother smirking at her misfortune. She looked back to Angela and it seemed she still had more berating words for her.

"You fell on your way back down from the roof yesterday. I saw it happen. You hit your head first and then I watched as you bounded forward just to have it slam into the ground again." Fareeha winced at the description. "You still have a concussion. It's not just going to heal overnight. I don't know what work you have to do but for the next couple of days, you are going to get very acquainted with that bed of yours."

Fareeha looked at Angela for a moment then over to her mother. She had a pleased expression on her face. "You heard the doctor." Ana stood up from the table. "Don't worry, I'll contact everyone and let them know that their protector needs to recuperate from her valiant hat rescue."

When Ana left, Angela led the dazed woman to the chair beside hers and motioned for her to take a seat. "Since you're here, you might as well eat."

Fareeha sat down and a plate of food instantly appeared before her. Hana had stopped eating while the woman was getting chastised and filled up a plate for her mother. "It's your favorite mama." She reached over for Fareeha's empty cup and filled it with water from the pitcher on the table. "Angela says you need to drink a lot of water." She placed the cup next to the full plate at sat back down to finish her meal. "Get better soon okay?"

Fareeha smiled at Hana's concern and went to eat. Angela had disappeared while she was eating. When she returned, she was holding a steaming cup and Fareeha could smell the aroma of coffee emanating from it. The blonde sat down next to her and drank her coffee. She would give her a side glance every now and then but otherwise let her eat in silence. When Hana finished eating she left the table saying something about tracking down one of the guards to practice with her.

The only sounds in the room were of Fareeha's spoon occasionally scraping against the plate. Angela was quiet. After the last bite of food, Fareeha turned towards Angela. "So I take it that you're not going to let me go?"

Angela drank the last bit of her coffee and eyed Fareeha. "That's correct." She put her cup down and moved to stand from her seat. After pushing in her chair, she extended her hand to Fareeha. "Come on, you have an appointment with your pillow."

Fareeha took the offered hand and the gentle pull had her standing upright. Angela led the way to Fareeha's room at a slow pace, their hands still intertwined. The doctor was the first to walk in. She led the taller woman all the way in before letting go of the hand she held. "You should probably change into something more comfortable." She started towards the door. "Rest well."

Before the woman could take hold of the door handle, Fareeha quickly reached out for her hand. She winced at the sudden movement but did not let go of her hand. Angela looked up into expressive brown eyes and waited for her to speak. "Don't go."

Angela considered the request and nodded slightly. "I'll stay until you fall asleep."

Fareeha seemed happy with that. She walked them back towards the bed and led the woman to sit down. "I'll go get changed." Careful not to rush, she headed towards her wardrobe for the second time that day and pulled out more comfortable clothing.

Angela watched as the woman disappeared into the bathroom. She was happy that Fareeha wasn't too stubborn about her injuries and was receptive to her instructions. Taking off her shoes, she got more comfortable in the bed. She ended up on her side facing inside the bed and waited for Fareeha to get back.

The sound of the bathroom door opening and closing alerted Angela to the other woman's arrival. She felt the bed give way as the woman laid down atop the covers. Fareeha offered one of her hands and Angela took it with both of hers. Once Angela started to smooth her fingers over the offered hand, Fareeha seemed to be deep in thought. She furrowed her brow in concentration and would absently mindedly move her hand along with Angela's.

Fareeha felt a gentle bop on her nose. She shifted her eyes over to Angela; the woman was giving her another frown. "Stop that," said Angela.

"Stop what?"

"Thinking too hard."

Fareeha went wide eyed. "I can't even think?"

Angela smiled. "Of course you can think. Just not too hard."

"I'm trying to remember what happened last night."

"Mmm..." Angela thought about how to word her response. "You hit your head."

"Well I got that much."

Her eyes crinkled at that. "Then we brought you here."

Fareeha looked a little alarmed. "Please tell me I didn't just pass out all sweaty on the bed."

"Ah, you were too stubborn to let that happen." Still holding onto Fareeha's hand, Angela shifted over onto her back. "Your mother helped you with the bath."

"Oh."

"Then I kept you awake for the next four hours. To make sure nothing else was wrong."

Fareeha seemed distraught at that. "Four hours with you? Sounds like something I'd want to remember."

"You seemed to make the most of it last night."

"Really?"

Angela nodded at that. "You had an unending stream of compliments. You were quite the flattering patient."

"Well, I like to spend time with you. Even if I'm incapacitated it would seem."

Angela could feel her heart speeding up. "Fareeha..."

She turned to face the woman. Reaching out a hand, she tucked strands of raven black hair behind an ear and lightly traced the woman's jawline as she retracted her hand. "You should get some more sleep."

"But I'm wide awake now." Angela chuckled at her response. "What's so funny?"

"It's just that you said the same thing last night."

"But I fell asleep?"

"I may have helped with that."

Fareeha seemed curious at that. "So you'll help me again?"

Angela bit her lip as she pondered what to do. She flicked her gaze over to brown eyes and seemed to find what she was looking for. "Lie down on your back."

Fareeha didn't question the blonde and did as requested. Shifting over so that she was facing the ceiling, she moved her head to continue to look at Angela. Letting go of the hand she was holding, the doctor started to get closer. When the distance between them was nonexistent, she reached an arm across Fareeha's stomach and rested her head on her chest. She seemed to focus a little until she could hear the steady rhythm of a heartbeat.

"Is this okay?" asked Angela

Fareeha encircled the doctor in her arms and nodded. "Yes, I like the weight."

Angela started to trace random patterns into Fareeha's shirt. After a while she began to hum the old melody from the night before. As the time passed by, the grip around Angela loosened and she could hear the heartbeat slow down into a more even rhythm.

*I'll stay for just a bit longer.*

-

She was in the middle of the air. Tracer could see nothing but the setting sun in the sky. Panic started to set in until a split second later, she was submerged in water. The clear water stung her eyes and she could see some fish swimming in the distance. Short of breath, she made a desperate move upwards, towards the orange sky. When she broke through the water's surface, she could see that the shoreline was only a short swim away.

With her approach to shore, she could see some people walking around the sand and others running along the shore. She walked the final way to a patch of sand a good way from the water. Plopping down, she took her shoes off laid back into the sand. She stared up into the sky and contemplated her predicament.

*Did I just travel somewhere? I don't remember a beach like this in Gibraltar.*

A child ran up to her and gave her a confused look. The boy started to say something but she couldn't understand him. *Sounds like how Ana and Fareeha talk to each other.* She tried to talk to him anyway. "Sorry love, what was that?"

The boy seemed to understand and started to speak again. "What kind of shoes are those?" He pointed to the wet shoes drying off in the sand.

"Oh, well they were made special. Because I can run so fast.

He seemed to light up at that. "I like to run too! Do you want to race?"

She liked his enthusiasm. "Sure thing but first, can you tell me where I am?"

He seemed confused but answered anyway. "Egypt."

*How in the... "What city?"*

He seemed confused again. "Egypt."

"Well yes Egypt but what city?"

By this point the boy had his arms crossed and looked a little miffed. "Egypt."

*Maybe I'm not saying this right.* "Where in Egypt am I?"

He shifted his weight onto one foot and crossed his arms behind his back. "You're in the Alexandria region." He hopped a little bit and asked, "Can we race now?"

"Uh, yeah. Let me put my shoes back on." Shaking the dried off sand from her shoes, she went to put them on. When she got up she noticed that she was covered in sand. *Well that won't do.* In the middle of wiping the excess sand off, the boy's father walked up and took him by the hand.

"I'm so sorry that he's been bothering you miss." Without waiting for a reply he walked away with the boy. In the distance she could hear the man chastising the boy about talking to strangers.

"Better see how to get back to Gibraltar," Tracer said to herself. She took a moment to survey the beach and spotted a trail leading to a line of trees. As she walked along the trail, she took a moment to examine the scenery. *Never been to Egypt before. It looks nice. I might have to come back.*

She cleared the trees and continued to follow the path. She could hear the sounds of people talking and cars driving along. Tracer reached the street and immediately saw that something was wrong. *This doesn't look right.* The sight of old timey cars driving along stone paved streets was concerning. *I really hope that this is a historic area and that they are simultaneously hosting an antique car show.* She noticed that the clothes looked simpler and there was a distinct lack of technology. Her hope seemed to dwindle.

*I think I must have went back in time. That's the only explanation.* Her first mission was to find out the date. She walked around for a bit until she found what looked to be a newsstand. Approaching the stand, she was happy to find some sort of newspaper on sale. Taking a newspaper, she noticed the stall owner giving her a distrustful look. "Ah, don't worry just want to check the front page real quick." The woman still gave her the scary eye.

Quickly scanning the newspaper, the only significant number she could find was the number six. *Well that doesn't look right.* She tried to make sense of the unfamiliar writing to no avail. She stood there for a bit longer and then huffed in defeat. Since she couldn't read the language, Tracer put the newspaper back down.

She looked back at the woman staring here down and nervously broached her question. "Say, you wouldn't happen to know the date would you?" Remembering her conversation with the boy she quickly added, "Specifically the year."

The woman seemed to be questioning her intelligence. "Year six."

*Well that just can't be right. Six? Six of what? This place doesn't seem that old.* She rubbed at the back of her head. "Could you be more specific? Year six? What does that mean?"

The woman seemed to come to an understanding. "You must have hit your head. Poor thing."

"Ah yeah." She rubbed the back of her head some more for emphasis. "I seem to have forgotten a few things."

The woman softened her gaze and pulled out a newspaper in English seemingly out of nowhere. She handed it to Tracer. "It's the sixth year of peace since the war. Don't worry about paying for the paper."

"Thank you miss. That's awfully kind of you." She walked away from the stand and found a bench to sit on. Opening up the paper, she got to work reading.

Most of it didn't make any sense. There was quite a few mentions to different families running different cities. Not a single page mentioned omnics and come to think of it, there were no pictures on the entire newspaper. What really caught her eye though was the mention of a specific name. Fareeha Amari. Apparently there was some sort of animal festival to be held in Cairo in a couple of days.

"Fareeha..." The newspaper said something about her being the protector of Egypt. "It sounds like her but..." *Maybe I'm not in the past. I might actually be somewhere else.* The new information made her feel disheartened. *How am I supposed to get back home from this?*

Sighing, Tracer stood up from the bench and started to follow the road. *I'll head to Cairo first. Even if this isn't the same Fareeha, she might be able to help me out in some way. Fareeha's always been helpful, I hope this one is no different.*

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Angela suddenly found herself waking up. She felt warm and moved to stretch a little. That's when she realized that she was still on top of Fareeha. The sleeping woman made no indication that she was waking up; Angela was glad her movement did stir the woman awake. Carefully, the doctor pulled away from the warm embrace and made her way over to the edge of the bed. She silently stood on the floor and walked over to where Fareeha was sleeping.

She leaned on the bed post for a moment to observe the woman. *She looks so peaceful.* Fareeha's body seemed to twitch a little and a moment later she seemed to be reaching out for something. When a lazy hand found another pillow, the unconscious woman pulled it to her body and curled around it.

Angela approached the sleeping woman and brushed away the hair covering her face. "Get better soon." She let her touch linger for a moment longer and gently covered the woman with a sheet. Silently, the doctor walked away.

When Angela was outside Fareeha's room, she took a moment to gather herself. There seemed to be a gentle thrum that enveloped her body when she was near the other woman. She took a deep breath and started to wander through the home. When she reached the second story, she noticed Hana was in the balcony playing chess by herself again. The girl's hair was slightly damp and she looked to be deep in concentration.

"Did Ana beat you again last night?"

Hana nodded her head. "Yeah, I'm trying to figure out her strategy."

Angela took a seat across from the girl and observed the chess game. Truth be told, she was more lost than Hana claimed to be. When the girl was stuck for the tenth time, Angela asked, "How do you feel about having me as your opponent?"

Hana didn't lift her eyes from the board. "Okay, just give me a second." She seemed to be

memorizing the placement of every piece on the board. After half a minute, she started to reset the board. "You can go first."

Angela examined her white pieces and moved a pawn first. Hana moved a pawn as well. "How's mama?"

"She should be fine, provided that she gets enough rest."

"So, you like her right?"

Angela nearly knocked her rook over. "Ah, I'm not going to lie. I do."

Hana was happy with the answer. "That's good. She likes you too you know." She moved her bishop three spaces. "I just want her to be happy. She seems happy with you."

"You think so?"

Hana nodded her head. "Yep. I'm an expert remember?" The girl hovered a hand over her next piece. "Angela..."

The doctor could sense her apprehension. "Yes what is it?"

"Nana told me about your parents." She looked up at Angela to gauge her reaction. "Do you still miss them?"

Angela put her piece down and took a deep breathe. "I do." She leaned back in her chair and stared out towards the river. "For a while after they died, it used to be that I would cry myself to sleep every night. There was this big gaping hole in my heart and it felt like a part of myself was just ripped away."

She looked back to Hana to find the girl listening intently. "As time went on, I found that the pain had lessened and I only cry when I'm feeling sentimental about them. I do however have dreams about them from time to time. It's hard to control what you dream about. So most of the time when I have those dreams, I wake up missing them desperately."

"I have dreams too." Hana looked back to the chess board. "Most of the time I end up crying. Mama says that it's okay to cry about my parents. She said it just means that I loved them."

Angela kept quiet and Hana continued. "She was the one that found me you know? Sometimes I have dreams about that day. I can remember my parents covered in blood and that man pointing a gun straight at my head. Sometimes he actually shoots and I wake up terrified." Angela reached over to take Hana's hand. The girl didn't resist and gave her back a squeeze in response.

"Mama actually helped me a lot with the pain, with missing them." She looked back up at Angela. "When she had me come live with her, I actually gave her a real hard time. Some days I would hide away for hours on end and others I would end up screaming at her to leave me alone. I would say things that I knew would hurt."

Hana started to tear up a little. She wiped them away and continued. "She wasn't them and I couldn't stand that she tried to take care of me like they were supposed to." She squeezed Angela's hand tighter. "But she never stopped trying for me. I remember the first time I called her mama. She *cried* Angela. We hugged it out for at least half an hour."

Hana seemed to liven up. "She was always there for me. She *is* always there for me. That's why I call her mama. Because she is my mama, and she always will be."

By this point, Angela had tears streaming down her face at Hana's story. "Hana, I-I..."

"Don't get mushy on my story doctor. For the most part, I'm okay now. I still miss them but I have mama in my corner." She let go of Angela's hand and motioned for the blonde to continue the game. "It's your move."

Angela wiped away her remaining tears and picked up her forgotten piece.

-

After half an hour of playing, Angela watched as Hana moved in with the checkmate. She looked over at Hana's side of the board and saw the graveyard of all her important pieces. She lost terribly to the girl.

"Oh wow Angela. I must be getting better or you're just really bad at this."

Angela recalled Ana's remark about her chess skills and sighed in defeat. She really was bad. She wasn't about to let Hana know that though. "Looks like your practice is paying off." From an Angela logic standpoint, who's to say that all that practicing didn't improve her skill?

"It wouldn't be so much of a stretch to say that I have gotten better." Hana deflated a little. "But not enough to beat nana."

"There you are." Angela turned around to find a sleepy looking Fareeha with bed hair standing at the doorway. "I woke up to find myself hugging a pillow and you gone."

Angela giggled at that. "I told you that I'd stay until you fell asleep."

"Technically you did say that, but I was hoping you'd forget about the leaving part."

Angela got up from the chair and took Fareeha's hand. She reached up her other hand and started to smooth down the messy hair. "You should be resting. Not walking around looking for me." She looked back to Hana and was surprised that the girl had set up where she previously left off so quickly. "You can have my company if you go back to resting."

Fareeha pouted a little. "But I'm hungry. I'm not supposed to starve am I?"

"You make a fair point." She looked over at Hana again. "Are you hungry Hana? We could all eat together?"

Hana shook her head no and made a shooing motion. "You two go eat. I'm still trying to figure this out." Angela could see a tiny smile on the girl's face.

Fareeha started to lead them downstairs. "You heard her. Let's go eat."

When they got to the kitchen, Fareeha started moving around looking for something to eat. Angela put a hand on her shoulder and had the woman sit down. "Sit. I'll make something." Fareeha made a move to stand back up but Angela wasn't having it. "Just sit. I promise I won't poison us."

So she sat. Fareeha watched as Angela prepared what looked to be sandwiches. Truth be told, it wasn't a bad sight. In fact, she was warming up to this whole sit and watch idea. Angela was quite a sight.

When Angela was done, she brought two plates over to where Fareeha sat and pulled up a chair next to the woman. "Here, I made it special." In reality, she just slapped together what she thought would go well together and hoped for the best. Angela wasn't particularly good at making food.

Fareeha picked up the sandwich and took a bite. It wasn't the best but...she's had worse? Looking into Angela's expectant eyes she quickly swallowed her bite. "It's good." Blue eyes seemed to sparkle and that beautiful smile reached her eyes. Fareeha gave herself a mental pat on the back for a job well done.

Angela started to eat her sandwich and Fareeha noticed the blonde's lack of reaction to the sandwich. She just simply ate away so Fareeha shrugged her shoulders and ate the rest of her sandwich. Slowly though. She didn't want to be chastised again.

In between bites, Angela would look over to Fareeha and she saw her in a new light. After the story with Hana, it would seem the woman had a heart of gold. She couldn't help but feel drawn to that light of hers.

She finished her sandwich before Fareeha did. The doctor watched as the injured woman took her last bites and noticed some crumbs at the corner of her mouth. "You have something..." Fareeha didn't understand what she meant so Angela went to brush the crumbs away. The feel of soft lips occasionally brushing across her fingertips sent a fire burning through her chest. She quickly retracted her hand and tried to calm down the feeling.

Fareeha was looking at her with intense brown eyes, and Angela felt the fire fan up again. "You have soft hands. It feels nice."

Memories of kisses along her knuckles were on the forefront of Angela's thoughts. Her skin remembered the feel of those lips. She closed her eyes and reveled in the feeling that overtook her. When she opened her eyes again, those same eyes were still locked on her. "Your lips are softer." She leaned forward enough to place a gentle kiss on the edge of Fareeha's lips.

The doctor stood up and gently tugged Fareeha up with her. "Come on, you need to rest." Fareeha followed along wordlessly back to her room.

-

Amélie was passing the time. She was reading a file on her next target while casually throwing her knives at the practice targets at the end of her room. Her throws never missed. The next mission was to gain influence over Brunei. The city was well known for their fuel tablet production and their protector was conveniently unsuitable to be head of the city. Well, as far as Talon standards go.

When Amélie ran out of knives to throw, she got up from her bed and went to retrieve them. Plucking them out with quick precision she placed them back in their hidden compartments within her clothing. Grabbing her bag, she left her room to find her partner. This was a mission he was actually required to go on.

She bypassed his room and headed straight for the training room. There was no one there except the form sitting in the middle of the room quietly meditating. As far as partners go, Hanzo was reliable. He was very stoic but that didn't get in the way of his reliability.

Amélie took a moment to study him. The sitting position he was in reminded her of the time they first met two years ago. Talon had sent her to recruit him and he wasn't that hard to persuade, given the right motivation.

It was raining in the shredded remains of the Shimada home. A man was sitting in the middle of a ruined garden, meditating as the rain covered him in cold droplets. He seemed to sense her presence immediately.

*“What do you want? If you’re here to kill me, many have tried.”*

Amélie stepped into plain view and walked closer to the man. She stopped at the edge of the rain. *“I wouldn’t dream of it.”* She crossed her arms and continued. *“What if I told you that the organization I work for can restore your family’s legacy? That they could have the empire they so wished for?”*

He opened his eyes and gave her a sharp glare. *“I am done with that part of my life.”*

Grabbing the folder she had tucked beneath her coat, she tossed it over to the man sitting in the rain. *“Are you sure?”*

Looking down at the quickly dampening file, he retrieved it and started to walk out of the rain. He opened the folder and began to read its contents. There were detailed descriptions of his time in the war. What he hid, who he spent time with, everything. Then there were several reports of some type of mysterious woman lurking around Egypt. She seemed to be targeting various crime syndicates that popped up after the war.

The eye of Horus description was what really caught his eye. Someone was lucky enough to survive and unmasked encounter with the woman. She was described as having only one eye, the tattoo clearly identifying who she was.

Hanzo was seething at the information. *“She’s still alive.”*

Amélie smirked. *“Yes. We can help you, provided you become a valued asset to the organization.”*

He didn’t take long to respond. His eyes narrowed and he gave off an aura of determination. *“Then let us leave this place. It seems there’s work to be done.”*

Amélie huffed at the memory and walked over to her partner. *“It’s time to go. You’re driving this time.”*

Hanzo got up in one fluid motion and walked over to his bag in the corner of the room. Placing it over his shoulder he reached for his bow leaned against the wall and headed out of the room.

*This is going to be a long drive.*

# Festival

## Chapter Summary

The kindness of strangers, getting ready for the festival, a parade, granmama bear strikes, and fireworks.

## Chapter Notes

So I realized I goofed up the timeline a bit. Just so no one has to go back a re-read minor changes here's the gist: Hana's story in chapter four was changed from seven years ago to eight years ago. The year in chapter 5 has been changed from two to six.

I was writing this chapter when that feeling of 'something's not right' wouldn't go away. I looked back at my timeline document and did some math. Math didn't add up no matter how hard I tried to just go with it. So I went back and change it to fit with my timeline I wrote.

Anyway, here's another one. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tracer was walking for endless hours. She'd occasionally ask if she was on the right road and many would just stare at the glowing contraption strapped to her chest. Most concluded that it was some sort of wearable lantern. Others were polite enough not to stare or ask her about it. By the time a day passed, everyone that saw her would refer to Tracer as the 'inventor'.

*Word sure does travel fast.* She quite liked the idea of being called an inventor so she gladly accepted her new title. It gave her a good cover story.

There were some problems in her journey. Her progress to Cairo was not fast enough. The festival was in one day and she wasn't even half way there. Then there was the issue of the sun. Tracer was covered in burns. Her face was bright red and her shoulders were peeling. Her knees looked like she skidded on some concrete and the sunburns made movement painful. *Wish I had the foresight to change out of my running clothes. But then again, it's not every day you get thrown into a different world.* The woman only wore a fitted sports tank and tight running shorts along with her shoes. Needless to say, she wasn't very covered.

The loud rumbling of Tracer's stomach reminded her of the other problem. She was desperately hungry. A full two days had passed since she fell in the ocean and she hadn't had anything to eat. She had no money and many would avoid talking to her since she looked so out of place. Sighing, she stepped into a shaded area and sat down. She needed to rest a bit. The hunger was dizzying.

She recalled how she slept on a bench the last two nights. The cold kept her awake for hours before she could finally pass out. Tracer would wake up right as the sun began to rise, unable to sleep comfortably in such unfamiliar places. She rubbed her back at the memory. *That wasn't really comfortable.*

A pair of legs were suddenly before her and she looked up to find an older woman staring down at her. Not wanting to just sit and stare back, Tracer lifted up a hand in greeting. "Hello there. Is there anything I can do for you?"

The woman stared a moment longer and then finally spoke. "You're that inventor."

Tracer rubbed the back of her head. "That's me."

"I need you to fix something."

"What needs fixing?"

The woman pointed to the car parked on the street. "My car won't run."

*I've tuned up my own car a few times but I don't know if these ones are remotely the same. Then again, maybe she'll be able to return the favor if I can get it to run.* Getting up, Tracer made up her mind. "Sure thing miss."

The woman led the way to her vehicle and stopped right next to it. "I drove over a hole and then as soon as I got here, it just stopped working."

*It might be that something's loose. This should be easy enough.* Crossing her fingers, Tracer hoped that these cars were similar enough to the ones from where she came from. "Could you pop open the hood?"

The woman opened the door she was leaning on and pulled on a lever. The hood popped open all the way and Tracer walked over to see what was wrong. When she leaned in to examine the inside, she found that everything looked wrong. Nothing looked remotely similar and that troubled her. *How does this thing even normally run?* She put her hands on the edge of the car and started to make sense of it all.

The woman stood behind her for a bit until she disappeared back into the car. Not wanting to seem like she didn't know what she was doing, Tracer started up a conversation. "So what's your name? You can call me Lena."

The woman took a few seconds to answer. She sounded busy. "Amani."

Tracer started to gently pull on various tubes and tap on the different components. "So where are you headed miss Amani? If you don't mind my asking."

"I'm going to the festival in the Cairo region." She paused to continue whatever task she was doing. "It's become a new favorite of mine."

Tracer suddenly felt the urge to fix the car intensify. She hurried along her search. "Really? I'm trying to head there myself. I want to see what all the fuss is about."

She could hear the woman laugh. "Could have fooled me. You look like you were trying to walk there."

She found something loose and quickly went to reattach it. "Well, you're not wrong."

Amani suddenly let out a burst of laughter. "People have been saying that you're a bit odd. Besides from that strange attire you're wearing, I can see why. Walking to Cairo. You'll never make it in time for the festival."

Tracer straightened up from underneath the hood and placed her hands at her hips. "I'll have you

know that I'm pretty fast. Fastest around." She didn't mention that the sunburns and the lack of food and water had significantly hindered her progress. She peered back under the hood. "Could you try starting the car now?" Fingers crossed, she waited with baited breath.

The woman stopped what she was doing and went to turn the car on. A few seconds later the engine roared to life and Tracer nearly squealed in joy. Amani turned the engine off and stepped out of the car. In her hands, she carried a plate of food. There was some sort of sandwich, a mix of cut up fruit and some sort of salad mixture.

"Here, you look like you could eat a horse." She handed over the plate and Tracer took it gratefully.

While Tracer was eating, Amani closed the hood to her car and pulled out a plate for herself. She joined Tracer in leaning against the car and started to eat her food. Tracer had just finished her sandwich when she started to speak. "Thank you. I was starting to get really dizzy." She started to stuff her face with the salad. "It's really good."

The woman just smiled and continued to eat. Tracer noticed that Amani didn't have as much food on her plate as she did. She returned her attention to finishing her fruit, suddenly feeling more grateful. When they were both done eating, the woman went back to her car and pulled out a canteen. She handed it to Tracer. "You need to drink water."

Grateful for the kindness shown, Tracer took the offered canteen. "Thank you." When she started to drink the water, Tracer found that she couldn't stop. She was so thirsty. Some of the water ran down her chin in her effort to quench her thirst.

When the canteen was empty, Tracer suddenly seemed guilty. "Sorry. I kind of drank it all."

"No need to apologize, there's more where that came from." Amani took the empty canteen and tossed it in the back of the car. She looked at Tracer for a minute, she was contemplating something. "You know, if you really wanted to go the festival, I'd be happy to offer you a ride there. If you go with me, you'd actually get there in time."

Internally, Tracer was jumping for joy. "Really? That's awfully kind of you."

"I'm feeling very generous." She sat down in the driver's seat and motioned for Tracer to get inside the car. "Come on, we leave now."

Tracer rushed to the passenger side and climbed in. Amani started the car and before she began to drive she reached into the back seat and pulled out a long-sleeved shirt. "Here, you look like you need it."

Tracer took the offered shirt gratefully. She carefully unlatched her accelerator and put it in her lap. Pulling the shirt over her head, she quickly strapped the accelerator back on. "Thank you. You've been very kind to me."

The woman smiled and started to drive. "I'd get comfortable. It'll take about two hours." Tracer leaned back in her seat and took Amani's advice. Her aching body needed to rest.

After some time, Tracer woke up. Rubbing her eyes, she noticed that they were still driving. One moment she was watching the landscape pass by and the next she was waking up. "How long was I out?"

"About an hour."

Tracer straightened out a bit. She decided that she should learn about this world she found herself

in. "Miss Amani, could you..." She paused her question to reword her approach. "Well, you see, I hit my head real bad a couple of days ago and I seem to have forgotten a few things." She rubbed her head for emphasis. "There's something that's been bugging me the most though. Could you tell me about the war? I don't seem to remember it."

The woman seemed to stiffen up a bit at its mention. She didn't respond.

Alarmed, Tracer quickly went to apologize. "I'm so sorry. You don't have to say anything about it. I'll just keep my mouth shut."

Amani stared straight ahead for a while longer. "It started with the Shimada and Vishkar families."

Tracer waited for her to continue, already interested in the details.

"It was a power play to gain more territory. They wanted an empire." Her hands tightened on the steering wheel. "They promised certain families wealth and land in exchange for an allied force against the rest of the cities. It was fifteen years of hell."

Amani took a deep calming breath and continued. "When all the bloodshed began, they found that they couldn't just step in and rip away our homes. They quickly changed tactics and started picking off smaller cities first. They gathered a fearsome army."

"Egypt played a major role in the war. We formed an alliance with other cities like Germany, Switzerland, South Africa, and Turkey. Our soldiers were sent everywhere to offer aid and defense. We had a brilliant protector serving us as well. Ana Amari was a war legend. For eleven years, she led our city from the front lines. We all thought all hope was lost when she disappeared."

Her fingers opened and closed on the steering wheel. "Our current protector, Fareeha Amari, held everything together after that. She showed our city dedication like no other and four years later the war ended with the execution of the Shimada family's leader. The Vishkar family had silently withdrawn from the war and no real punishment was bestowed upon them. They claimed that the Shimadas had roped them into it, but anyone with a mind knows their role in the war."

Tracer took in all the new information with alarm. *So when they say it's Year Six, they mean it's been six years after fifteen years of fighting.* Trying to change the subject a bit, Tracer asked another question. "How do you like Fareeha then?"

The woman loosened her grip on the steering wheel a bit. "We are lucky to have her. She's an extraordinary woman." Amani seemed to shake a little. "Eight years ago, during the war, a military camp burned to the ground due to a surprise attack. My son didn't make it out alive."

Tracer's blood went cold at the information. "She went back to the camp and led a retrieval of the burned remains of all the people who died. Some weeks after the funeral, I got a visit from her. She gave me my son's tags and asked me to forgive her. She wanted *my* forgiveness for 'failing to protect him'." Her voice sounded shaky.

She took another moment and continued. "Her dedication to protect led Egypt to the peace we have today." There was a pause of silence. "She's going to be at the festival you know."

"Do you think I'd get a chance to meet her?"

Amani started to laugh. "You'll need luck on your side for that but who knows, you might find that luck."

*I hope I get lucky too.*

-

Three days had passed and Fareeha seemed to have recovered from her fall. It was the middle of the afternoon and she was in her room helping Hana put together her costume. Today was the day of the festival and it became a sort of tradition for Fareeha to help Hana with her pink rabbit costume.

Hana was wearing a pink hooded half cloak with pink bunny ears stitched on. Her shirt and pants were white and she had on a pair of pink boots. Her hands were covered with white gloves, pink paw pads painted on the insides. She had a white rabbit tail pinned to the back on her pants. Fareeha was currently painting pink triangle shaped whiskers on the girl's face. Every now and then her face would twitch but Hana stayed still through the whole ordeal.

A knock on the door was heard and Fareeha called for them to come in. Angela opened the door and found Hana tying her cloak shut while Fareeha put a dollop of pink paint on the girl's nose. "And done. The Pink Rabbit lives again."

Hana giggled at that and hopped off from the stool she was sitting on. She leaned over and kissed Fareeha on the cheek, smudging some of the pink paint that was on her nose on her mother's face. "Thank you mama, I'm going to go find nana." Waving a hello towards Angela, Hana left the room in a small sprint.

Walking over to Fareeha, Angela had a curious look on her face. "Ana said to come see you here. What did you need?" She got closer and curled some black locks around her finger. "Not that you should need anything to see me."

Fareeha smiled at that. "We need to get ready for the festival." She backed away from Angela and opened her wardrobe. She pulled out two similar dresses. One was blue and the other was white. The dresses were sleeveless and looked like they would reach to just above the knee. They had gold accents around the middle. Fareeha handed Angela the white one. "Since you wanted to match."

Angela lit up when she realized what was going on. "So are we really going as a pair of birds?" Fareeha nodded and the doctor ran to the bathroom to put on her dress. When she got out, Fareeha had already changed into her dress and had various paints on display. Angela let out an excited squeal.

She bounded over to where Fareeha was and grabbed a paint brush. "Let's get started."

They started with Angela first. Fareeha would paint gold feathers on the arm Angela wasn't using. She'd help Angela get places she couldn't reach. She blushed a little when she got to painting parts of Angela's thighs. The blonde didn't seem to mind and would giggle more when the paint brush tickled her skin. She helped paint rings around Angela's calves to better resemble bird legs.

When it came time to help Fareeha, Angela got very into it. She took her time to make sure she got the detail right and when she got to helping Fareeha with her thighs, she spent considerably more time making sure the 'details were correct'. The blue feather designs looked beautiful on Fareeha's skin. Angela was careful not to smudge any of the paint. When they finished painting Fareeha's bird legs, the taller woman reached for a darker shade of gold paint and motioned for Angela to stay still.

"The finishing touch is the beak." Fareeha leaned forward and carefully painted a diamond that stretched across Angela's nose and onto her cheeks. Angela focused on the intense concentration of Fareeha's gaze and she almost drifted off in admiration.

They switched when Fareeha was finished painting. Angela took the brush and paint but just stared up at the taller woman for a bit. She was smiling and it was such a beautiful one. The doctor wanted to lock in the memory forever. She traced a line from Fareeha's ear down her jawline. "So beautiful." Angela's smile widened more when she saw the blush. Dipping the brush in the paint she started on Fareeha's beak.

Angela noticed that Fareeha was pointedly staring at her lips. She could feel a warmth envelope her and she bit her lip to stifle the knowing smile. She liked the attention and didn't want Fareeha to stop giving it. When she finished the beak, she put the paint aside and gave Fareeha a wink. "There, all done."

Fareeha smiled as she backed away to her wardrobe again. She pulled two pair of medium length sandals. She handed a white pair to Angela and held onto a black pair for herself. "Mother told me what shoe size you were. I don't know how she knows but I won't question it."

Angela didn't seem surprised. She took the offered shoes and removed the ones she was wearing. She pulled on the sandals and watched as Fareeha meticulously fiddled with the straps of hers before putting them on. The woman waked over to a small bag resting on her desk and pulled out what looked like feather hair accessories.

As Fareeha got closer, Angela could see that the accessories were dyed gold and blue. Angela was handed the blue dyed feathers and she suddenly felt gentle hands guide her bangs to the side as the golden feather clip locked them in place. The hands lingered for a bit, gentle strokes smoothing the golden locks in one direction. "Perfect," Fareeha quietly mumbled.

When those hands moved away Angela noticed her eyes were closed. She smiled a small smile and slowly opened her eyes. Reaching up, she did the same with Fareeha. "Now, we're a couple of lovebirds."

Fareeha grabbed her hand and started to lead them out of the room. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

-

Hana was already sitting with Ana. Her feet were propped up and her head was resting on Ana's lap. She was humming to herself, feet bobbing along as she enjoyed the quiet time spent with her grandmother. Ana was the one to notice Fareeha and Angela approaching them. She tapped Hana on the shoulder and pointed in their direction. The girl tilted her head in the suggested direction and immediately sat up. *They actually did it.*

Hana got up from where she was sitting and walked over to Fareeha and Angela. She had to get a better look. The feather designs were so nice to look at. Each arm had a giant feather surrounded by smaller one wrapping around in a circular pattern. She noticed that their outfits matched, aside from the different colors. The golden diamond beaks actually helped bring out their eye color. Hana was very impressed. "You guys look so nice."

Fareeha smiled at the compliment. "Thank you Hana." She looked over to her mother and asked, "Is everyone ready to go?"

Ana stood up and started towards them. Before she could walk two steps Angela burst out with a question. "Ana, you're not going to dress up?" She looked at the older woman with concerned eyes.

Ana sighed and reached into one of her pockets, pulling out a vial of black paint. Dipping a finger in she quickly drew three thin lines across both cheeks. "There, now I'm a cat." Angela seemed

pleased with the effort. Her brightened smile nearly blinded the older woman.

“If we’re all ready, we need to leave now. Hana’s on the fifth float so we need to get there in time.” Fareeha started to lead them out of the home.

“Float?” asked Angela.

“Yeah, the festival kicks off with a parade. Everyone love the Pink Rabbit so Hana gets on one of the earlier floats. Some of them have dancers, others pass out candy, there’s always one with just children, and you and I will be on one as well.”

Angela seemed both curious and excited. “Just you and me?” Fareeha nodded. “What do we do?”

Fareeha rubbed at the back of her head. “I usually just smile and wave but...” The woman started to blush.

”But?”

“We could...try dancing.” She seemed even more nervous.

Angela took a dangling hand. “Of course I’ll dance with you.” She lifted the hand and twirled beneath it. “Just remember that I like to be spun around.” Letting go of the hand, Angela gave Fareeha a wink.

”I-I’ll keep that in mind.”

When they reached the car, Fareeha moved to get in the driver’s seat but Ana beat her to it. “You can sit in the back with Angela. Come on Hana, you’re riding in the front with me.” Before getting in the car, she turned to her daughter and gave her a quick wink.

-

Last night, Tracer spent the night at the home of Amani’s niece. They were very kind about it.

*”Hello my darling!” Amani gave her niece a big hug. She turned to introduce Tracer. “This is my guest. Her name is Lena. She’s an inventor.” The woman wrapped Tracer in a side hug. “The poor thing hit her head pretty bad and has been wandering around Egypt.” She started to walk inside, Tracer in tow. “While she was fixing my car, she said that she was heading to Cairo to see the festival.” Tracer felt a pat on her back. “I gave her a ride here and I was hoping if you wouldn’t mind another guest for the night.” Amani gave her niece some fearsome puppy eyes.*

*“Of course not Aunty!” The young woman ran to a closet and took out some sheets. “I hope you don’t mind sleeping on the sofa. It’s all I have since Aunty is here as well.”*

*Tracer blinked a few times, in awe of the kindness shown towards her. “Don’t worry about that love! I’ve slept on worse.” She rubbed her back in memory on the benches. “This is a first class upgrade!” That night, she wasn’t cold and she slept peacefully.*

*The following morning, Tracer woke up to find the table filled with food. She was suddenly in a chair, Amani pushing her down into the seat. “Eat. Can’t enjoy the festival on an empty stomach.” Her niece nodded in agreement.*

*When they were done eating, Tracer thanked the family profusely. “Thank you so much for all your kindness. You’ve done so much for me and I really appreciate that. I don’t know how to repay you.”*

*Amani gave Tracer a big hug and shoved a small pouch in her hands. "Just enjoy the festival okay?"*

Tracer was roaming the busy streets as she remembered the events of yesterday. When she left in the morning she opened the pouch to find some money and a note that said, 'Can't enjoy the festival if you can't eat.' *Those two have got to be the nicest people I've ever met.*

Her stomach started to rumble and she looked around for some food stalls. *Might as well get something to eat then.* When she had a wrapped up sandwich in hand, Tracer found a corner to sit in and started eating. *I'm really loving the food here.*

While eating, she sat in her cozy corner and watched as everyone bustled along. It looked like they were doing some last-minute preparations. There were tall baskets filled with confetti set up all around and everyone started to clear the street. That's when she heard a booming uproar of applause coming from down the street. Quickly stuffing the remaining bit of her sandwich into her mouth, Tracer set out to see what was going on.

Confetti cannons littered the street in colorful paper and an announcer with a booming voice stood atop a giant podium announcing the start of the parade. Tracer broke through the crowd in time to see a team of ten horse riders start to gallop down the street, different banners hanging off their saddles. The horses were followed by a street performer troupe. They were performing all sorts of flips while keeping up a running pace.

Tracer watched as larger platforms pulled along by cars starting to make their way onto the street. The first platform had nothing but children on it. They'd throw confetti and candy onto the street. They did a cute little dance routine in between. The next couple of platforms had different dancers and singers and the like. The fifth platform is what really caught her eye, and everyone else's it would seem.

Everyone started chanting 'Pink Rabbit' and the only one on the platform responded with glee. She twirled around into a victory pose and then picked up a basket. Going around the sides of the platform she started to toss out pink rabbit shaped confetti onto the crowd. She yelled out some phrases but Tracer couldn't understand. The crowd seemed to love it though. When the platform got close enough, Tracer could see that the girl looked strikingly similar. "D.va?"

Not even bothering to see the rest of the parade, Tracer started to weave through the crowd honed in on the Pink Rabbit.

-

Angela was standing on the float with Fareeha and she was so amazed. There was every kind of color splashed out across the street. The crowd was a mixture of cheering individuals dressed up in various styles of animal. Her heart fluttered when she looked back to Fareeha enjoying it all.

Amidst the cheering and applause Fareeha could hear Angela say, "I've never done something like this before."

She reached down to lace her fingers with Angela's. Leaning down a little bit, she placed a kiss on the blonde's cheek just as the announcer boomed out 'The Lovebirds'. The cheering from the crowd increased considerably and Fareeha raised their conjoined hands in the air. Angela could barely hear the woman say, "There's a first time for everything."

Angela joined Fareeha in waving to the crowd, keeping a firm grip on the taller woman's hand. She could feel the smile stretching across her face and she found herself laughing along. Angela liked being in that moment. It sent good feelings traveling throughout her body, the excitement all

around fueling the intensity. When she looked back to Fareeha, the woman had a full smile, shining teeth glinting in the light from the setting sun.

From behind, some music began to play. It was lively and festive. Angela could see some of the children on the side of the street start to dance. That's when she felt herself twirling. She let out a small squeak. When she returned to her original position, Fareeha was giving her such a warm and happy look.

"Dance with me?" asked Fareeha.

Taking the other woman's hand, Angela started to move along. "I'd like nothing more."

The doctor found that she didn't know the dance moves but she tried anyway. She would make up moves and Fareeha would smile at her effort. The taller woman remembered their earlier conversation and made sure to twirl the blonde as requested. So even if Angela didn't know the dance, and even if she's never done something like this before, the important thing was that she was having fun. More importantly, she was having fun with Fareeha.

So they danced, and they waved. There was smiling and lots of flowers thrown onto their float. There was laughter and cheering. Angela couldn't get enough. When their float made it to the end of the parade. Angela grabbed as many flowers as she could. Fareeha stepped off the platform first and helped Angela climb down after.

While they walked amongst the crowd, Angela was busy intertwining the stems together. Fareeha loosely wrapped an arm the doctor so she wouldn't get lost in the crowd. Angela liked the contact and shimmied closer while finishing the task at hand. When she was done, Angela lifted the finished product into Fareeha's line of sight. It was crown made from the different flowers thrown onto the float.

Angela motioned for the taller woman to lean down. Fareeha let go of the blonde's shoulders and leaned her head down. She felt as fingers gently placed the crown atop her head. Looking back at Angela, she could see the woman admiring her work. "I must say, you seemed to have gotten more beautiful," said Angela.

The doctor watched as Fareeha developed a small blush, a shy smile gracing her face. Taking hold of the woman's hand, Angela put Fareeha's arm back around her shoulder and circled her own arm around the taller woman's waist. Fareeha smiled down at her actions.

"Let's go eat."

Angela nodded in agreement but stopped short. "What about Hana and Ana?" She looked around in a quick search for them.

"We have a meet up time scheduled for when the fireworks start. They said that they were going to do their own thing this year."

Angela smirked at the hidden meaning behind their explanation. Moving forward again she spoke again, "Then let's go eat. I'm in the mood for something sweet."

-

Tracer was still on the move trying to catch up to the familiar girl. Earlier, she watched as the girl hopped off from the platform and immediately started signing autographs. *Guess she's pretty popular here as well.*

Just as she was about to catch up, she felt a sharp yank on the strap of her accelerator.

She was face to face with a glaring eye staring her down. The woman started speaking to her but Tracer couldn't understand.

"Ana? Is that you?" Tracer was too surprised to say anything else.

Ana seemed surprised in the familiarity in the stranger's voice but didn't question it. "What are you doing following my granddaughter?" Her grip on the stranger tightened. "I'd suggest you start talking now."

Tracer started to panic a little. "Whoa Ana, sorry yeah? I didn't want to do anything to her." She held up her hand over her accelerator. "Promise."

"Then what did you want?"

"Well, you see, I seem to have found myself very...lost. I saw her and she looked like someone I knew. Just wanted to talk to her is all."

Ana was reluctant to believe her story. "I don't trust you." She still had a tight grip on the stranger.

Tracer thought for a bit and had an epiphany. "Since you're here, do you know where Pharah is?"

Ana looked curious. "How do you know about Pharah?"

*Oh wow, must have stepped in it there.* Tracer tried to come up with an excuse to cover her slip up. "Me and Fareeha are friends. We just haven't seen each other...since after the war. War buddies and all. Lots of stories exchanged."

Ana still didn't trust the stranger but let go of her anyway. "You stick with me. I want to keep my eye on you."

Tracer didn't question the woman. She was grateful to come out of that encounter unscathed. "Yes, ma'am!"

Ana started to lead them through the crowd but she didn't seem to be heading anywhere in particular. The older woman noticed Tracer's confusion. "I'm giving Fareeha time to enjoy herself. I'm afraid you'll be in my company for a while longer."

Tracer seemed satisfied with that. "No worries love. It's not every day you get to spend time with your buddy's mum." She put a big, hopefully disarming, smile on her face. "You can call me Lena by the way."

"Okay Lena, you can tell me why you're lost."

Tracer thought about the story she's been giving people. With the 'war buddy excuse' she just gave Ana, she knew she'd have to change it up a bit. "Well you see..."

-

By the time night had settled in, Angela and Fareeha had eaten so many sweets and enjoyed most of what the festival had to offer. There was even a stall that let people hold and pet cats. Fareeha seemed to really like that one so they spent a bit of time there. Some of the cats would attempt to swat at Fareeha's feathers but she didn't seem to mind.

Fareeha was leading them up a fairly isolated hill, Angela in tow eating some more sweets she held onto for later. "This is the best spot to see the fireworks. Mother and Hana should be here." When they got to the top of the hill, Hana was sitting by herself in the grass. She was rocking side

to side, waiting for the show to start.

She noticed their arrival but noticed the lack of her grandmother. “You haven’t seen nana have you? She was supposed to be here.”

Fareeha furrowed her brows at that. “No I can’t say that I have.” She thought about it a little more. “She probably found something that’s keeping her busy.”

Hana still looked a bit disappointed. “She’s gonna miss the fireworks.”

Angela took a seat next to the pouting girl. “I’m sure she didn’t want to miss them.”

Hana nodded in agreement. “She’s always off being sneaky. Must be important. Maybe someone’s causing trouble and she’s giving them a scolding.” She smiled at the thought of what a scolding from Ana would entail.

The girl looked up at Fareeha and motioned with her eyes to sit next to Angela. Fareeha smiled at the girl’s suggestion but sat next to the doctor anyway. Crossing her legs, she leaned her arms back and looked up towards the sky.

The fireworks started with a series of different colors lighting up the sky. The blasts started to spread out and Angela could start to make out shapes. They were all different animals. She smiled when the Pink Rabbit lit up the sky. Angela could hear Hana shout in glee from beside her.

Then Angela wasn’t looking at the sky anymore. She was transfixed on the look on Fareeha’s face. She had a sparkle in her eyes and the colors from the fireworks lit her face in beautiful shades. She reached out a hand and covered one of Fareeha’s. The taller woman noticed the contact and shifted her gaze from the sky to Angela’s eyes.

Straightening up, Fareeha felt her hand being tugged closer to Angela’s chest. She turned so that she was facing the doctor. They were gazing into each other’s eyes and the world seemed to fade away.

Angela reached out and tucked a strand of black hair behind her ear. She broke the eye contact to look at Fareeha’s lips. Flickering her gaze upward for a moment, she noticed Fareeha doing the same. Leaning in close, she whispered into Fareeha’s ear. “I’m falling for you.” She pulled back a bit and heard nothing but the sound of her heartbeat thumping in her ears. Wrapping her arms around the woman’s neck, Angela leaned in slightly. Fareeha met her the rest of the way.

It was everything Angela expected and more. Fareeha’s lips were impossibly soft. The gentle kiss felt warm and the familiar buzz she felt around the woman spiked up in intensity. Her skin started to warm up but she tried to get closer, the contact between them feeling heavenly. When they parted, Angela could see the happiness radiating from Fareeha’s eyes, her parted lips bringing her back in for more.

Angela could feel strong arms wrap around her waist and soft lips part against her own. Pulling in the woman closer still, the kiss intensified and Angela was reveling in the moment. There were literal fireworks going off and the moment couldn’t have been more perfect.

-

Ana and Tracer were nearly all the way up the hill when Ana stuck an arm out and blocked Tracer’s path.

Confused Tracer asked, “What’s wrong? Aren’t they up there?” Ana pointed to the top and Tracer followed her line of sight. She saw Fareeha and she was kissing Angela. They seemed to be really

into it. She looked back to Ana, a proud look on her face.

Ana rubbed at her eye. "It's about time."

Tracer looked back to the couple. "Did her and Angela just get together or something?" Ana whipped her head towards her and Tracer immediately realized her mistake. She clamped her mouth shut and hoped Ana wasn't about to see through her story.

No such luck. "How do you know about Angela if you haven't seen your 'war buddy' for six years?" She grabbed onto Tracer's wrist and tightened the grip.

"Well, you see..." She racked her brain for an excuse but came up short. *There's no fooling Ana.* "I can explain! Just know that I truly am lost and I need help."

Ana heard the sincerity and let go. "Then let's talk. No stories this time." Wanting Fareeha and Angela to have their moment, she lead them away from the hill and headed towards the car.

-

Hana tried her best not to interrupt. She really did. She wasn't one to ruin a moment, or as it would seem *the* moment. It's just that the fireworks ended some time ago and she wanted to go home. Once the excitement died down, it was starting to get chilly. "Um, I know you two are in the mood and all but...could we go home now? Nana still didn't get here so maybe she's waiting at the car."

The two ended the kiss abruptly and looked embarrassed. They gave each other shy smiles and Angela giggled at their predicament. Fareeha spoke up first. "Y-yeah. Let's go. I'm sure mother is waiting at the car."

Standing up, Fareeha helped Hana and Angela to their feet. She held onto both of their hands and started to lead them down the hill. Once they got to the bottom. Angela unraveled her hand from Fareeha's grasp and held onto her arm instead, leaning her head on the taller woman's bicep.

Angela managed to convince Fareeha to get some sweets for the ride home and then they set about finding the car. The street lamps were the only lights illuminating the area and Hana ended up pulling the couple towards where she remembered the car was parked. Angela and Fareeha were two busy smiling at each other to concentrate on where the car was.

When they finally found the car, Ana is already waiting with a stranger standing next to her.

The stranger was the one to speak up first. "Hiya everyone! I'm Lena." She gave a wave.

Ana glanced at Lena then back to her family. "She's going to be a guest."

Fareeha seemed perplexed and tried to gleam any information from her mother's eye. This Lena looked a little worse for wear and the glowing...lightbulb strapped to her chest was odd. Ana was giving her a look that said 'be polite'. Letting go of Hana's hand, she offered it to Lena. "It's nice to meet you Lena. I'm Fareeha."

Lena took the offered hand and shook it. "Likewise."

Fareeha motioned to Angela and Hana beside her. "This is Angela and Hana." The two waved in response. "I guess we should be going now? It's getting late."

Everyone seemed to agree. As Fareeha walked towards the driver's seat, Ana blocked her path for the second time that day. Her response was similar as well. "I'll drive, you sit in the back." The

older woman wiggled her eyebrow and opened the door, taking a seat behind the wheel.

“Come on Lena, you sit in the front with me.” The woman made no complaint and got in.

Fareeha sat in the back again, this time with both Angela and Hana sitting by her sides. Angela leaned over to place a kiss at the edge of her jaw and leaned her head against a warm shoulder. Hana made herself comfortable on Fareeha as well.

Wedged between Angela and Hana, Fareeha felt like the luckiest woman in the world.

## Chapter End Notes

Considered adding some Talon stuff but I felt that this chapter didn't need it.

## Chapter Summary

Lots of fluff and things happen.

## Chapter Notes

Guys, this one is pretty big. It's been a couple weeks since I updated so hopefully this makes up for it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Fareeha was startled awake when the car turned off. On the ride home, she could hear her mother and Lena murmuring quietly in the front. She half-heartedly tried to pay attention but the influence from Hana already having fell asleep and the comforting touches from Angela had her dozing off. She was still trying to blink away the sleep from her eyes when she heard Ana say something to Angela. She watched as her mother led their guest towards the home, leaving the rest of them inside the car.

Angela lifted her head from Fareeha's shoulder. "Ana said that she still needed to talk to Lena so they went inside." She let go of Fareeha's arm. "You two looked so peaceful sleeping."

Fareeha smiled at the comment. She put a hand on Hana's shoulder and gently tried to shake the girl awake. "Hana." The girl didn't budge. "Looks like she plans on staying asleep." Carefully, Fareeha maneuvered herself so that she exited the car from Hana's side. She leaned over the girl and started to pick her up.

Angela watched as Fareeha showed no signs of straining. She watched as Fareeha took care not to jostle Hana too much, carefully pulling her into her arms. Her heart warmed at the sight.

Fareeha bent over a little to look at Angela. "I'm going to take her inside." She straightened up and closed the open door with her hip. She walked over to the side Angela was sitting, leaving enough room for the doctor to get out of the car. "I'll walk you inside as well."

Angela climbed out of her seat and shut the door. Leaning against the car frame, she couldn't help but take some time to admire the taller woman. Flower crown still perched on her head, the feather accessories having flattened back, blue painted feathers glowing in the moonlight, and holding Hana with an unending strength, Angela couldn't stop the loud thumping of her heart.

Fareeha extended an elbow to the silent doctor, the other woman seemed to shake out of her daze and took hold of the offered arm. "You seemed lost for a bit there." She started to lead them to the front door.

They were walking slower than usual, but Angela didn't seem to mind. "I was thinking about how strikingly beautiful you were."

Fareeha stumbled on her feet. She stopped walking to balance herself, careful not to wake Hana.

Angela tried to control her giggling but Fareeha heard it anyway. She found herself warming up rapidly so she closed her eyes and took a deep breath to try and calm down. After tonight, she shouldn't get so worked up over Angela's compliments. Peeking open one eye, she saw the blonde's beautiful smile and quickly closed it again.

After taking a couple of calming breaths, Fareeha felt soft, cool fingers lightly trail along her jaw. The touch helped relieve some of the heat from her face. Angela's touch was very soothing and soon she found herself calm enough to actually look at the doctor again. She still had that wonderful smile but Fareeha found herself smiling back.

Angela's smile widened when she saw the taller woman looking more comfortable. "You really are so beautiful." She brought her hand back down to Fareeha's arm and placed a kiss on the woman's bicep. "We really should start walking again if Hana is ever going to make it to her bed."

Fareeha blinked a couple of times and then seemed to realize that she was still carrying the sleeping girl. She resumed walking, Angela smiling into her arm all the while. "Yes, of course." Fareeha grinned when she heard the muffled giggle. The rest of the way to the door was quiet save for Angela's light humming and the sound of their footsteps along the stone walkway.

As the front door got closer and closer, Fareeha could see her mother and Lena sitting by the door drinking tea. They seemed to be deep in conversation when Ana looked her way. Fareeha watched her mother tap Lena on the shoulder and point in their direction. When Lena looked over at them, she seemed so excited.

Their guest was gushing about something Fareeha couldn't hear. The only part of Lena's ramble she did catch was the last bit. "I can't wait to be able to tell everyone about this. Especially D.va, she's not going to let this live down."

Her mother seemed amused as well. "They do make quite the sight."

When they arrived at the front door, Angela let go of Fareeha's arm and walked straight over to Ana. Fareeha and Lena watched as Angela grabbed both of the older woman's hands and just smiled at her. Ana nodded in Fareeha's direction and winked at the doctor. Angela seemed to smile more at that and nodded, giving a wink to Ana as well. Ana pulled Angela in for a hug; she whispered something in Angela's ear that made the doctor giggle and nod in affirmation. Ana gave a heart-felt laugh and patted Angela on the back in return.

After watching the exchange between Ana and Angela, Lena looked over to Fareeha for some answers. The taller woman just shrugged. She walked closer to her guest and whispered, "I have no idea what's going on."

Lena put her hand on her chin and nodded in understanding. "Must be some sort of secret language they have."

"Did my mother show you where you'll be sleeping?" Even though she was still holding Hana, Fareeha was more than willing to show her guest some hospitality.

"Yeah she did. Don't need to worry about me." Lena rubbed at the back of her head and gestured towards Hana. "Aren't you tired from holding her so long?"

Fareeha shifted her arms underneath Hana but made no indication that she was exerting herself. "Ah, I always end up carrying her. I'm just used to it by now." She headed towards the door and Lena rushed to open it for her. "Thank you. I'm just going to put her to bed. Goodnight Lena."

“Yeah, no problem. Goodnight Fareeha.”

Angela looked over to Fareeha walking inside the home after she heard the exchange of goodnights. Careful not to raise her voice too much, Angela called after Fareeha. “If Hana wakes up, tell her goodnight for me.”

Fareeha nodded. “I will.” She turned back and started towards the direction of Hana’s room. As she got farther away from the door, the sounds of conversation got lower and lower. She could only make out the sound of Lena yelping and her mother shouting, “I have the best news to tell you Lena!” before she couldn’t make out anything they were saying.

Fareeha made the familiar trek to Hana’s room and stopped before the door. She smiled at the carved name on the wooden surface. A memory of a younger Hana standing on a stool, carefully carving out her name in the new language she was learning flashed through her mind. Opening the door, Fareeha paid close attention to the floor. In the dark room, she could see that there was a bit of everything strewn about. She carefully shuffled around the clothes and stuffed animals that littered the floor.

On the bed, Fareeha could make out a half-eaten bowl of figs and a chess set with a game in progress. Putting Hana down on the bed, she walked over to the wall and turned on one lamp. She went back to the bed and grabbed the bowl, placing it on the desk. She carefully studied the chess set and started to move it. A few pieces fell onto the floor as she moved the set to the desk. She quickly picked up the fallen pieces and placed them in their proper positions.

Fareeha went back to Hana and started taking off her boots. Hana always had the laces pulled extra tight so it was a struggle for Fareeha to get them off whenever the girl passed out. She just finished taking off one boot when Hana twitched and nearly kicked Fareeha in the face with her booted foot. *I don’t think I’ve recovered enough to take another kick to the face. Angela wouldn’t like it, that’s for sure.*

Taking a moment to make sure that Hana was done moving, Fareeha went to work on the second boot. *With her laces this tight, I don’t know how her feet don’t just fall off.* Pulling on the boot with some strength, Fareeha fell back onto the floor when it finally came free. On the way down, she started to panic. The panic faded when she landed in a pile of clothes. Even though her head was safe, Fareeha went to inspect it from habit. Sending a silent ‘thank you’ to the cosmos, she got up from the floor and went back to the bed.

She untied the cloak and pulled the hood down. Turning Hana on her side, she unpinned the bunny tail and took the cloak off. Satisfied that the girl could sleep comfortably, Fareeha pulled the covers over Hana. She reached out and traced the pink whiskers on the girl’s face. “Everyone loved the Pink Rabbit today. Just like every other year, you did great.”

Fareeha headed towards the small bathroom connected to Hana’s room. She grabbed a wash cloth and ran some water over it in the sink. When she got back to the bed, Hana had her eyes cracked open.

“Hey mama, did I fall asleep?” She yawned and rubbed at her eyes.

Fareeha wiped away the pink on Hana’s nose. “You passed out the second you were in the car.” She started wiping away the pink on her cheeks. “I’m surprised you even woke up. You were jostled around quite a bit.

Hana didn’t respond. It looked like she was putting all her effort into staying awake. The wet washcloth didn’t seem to phase her either. “Angela told me to say goodnight to you.” Wiping away the last of the pink, Fareeha leaned over and gave Hana a kiss on the cheek. “So,

goodnight.”

“Hana looked up at Fareeha with her tired eyes and smiled. “Was the kiss from her too?”

Fareeha ruffled her hair. “Nope. Just me.”

Hana shifted over to her other side. She yawned again and took a while to respond. “I forgot, you want to keep them all for yourself.” She smirked when she heard Fareeha sputtering for a response.

“I-I...it’s...

“Don’t worry mama, I’m happy for you,” Hana sleepily mumbled. She felt fingers smoothing down her hair and after a while she drifted off.

Fareeha retracted her hand when Hana fell asleep again. She smiled warmly at the girl. “Goodnight Hana,” she whispered. Stepping over the pile of clothes she fell on top of, Fareeha considered picking up the mess. *Since her mess saved my life, I’ll leave it be this time.*

She walked across the room and after turning off the wall lamp, Fareeha opened the door and left Hana’s room. She quietly shut the door and traced the pattern of Hana’s name on the door. “Sweet dreams Pink Rabbit.”

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After spending some time with Ana and Lena, Angela found the new guest to be quite lively. She asked Angela a lot of questions, so much so that the doctor could barely keep up with the woman. Most of the questions Lena asked, she answered before Angela could reply. Angela was perplexed on how Lena seemed to know the answers even though they’ve never meant. The doctor would glance over to Ana who gave a shrug every time. When she would look back to Lena, the woman would say something like ‘Lucky guess’ or ‘You seem the type’ so Angela chopped it up to Lena being a really good guesser.

Then there would be a follow up question to her question, Angela found that Lena seemed more interested in her answers to those. She didn’t even try to guess on the follow up.

Every now and then, Angela would glance down at the light-bulb strapped to the woman’s chest. If Lena noticed, she didn’t let on that she did. *Does she need more light to see? Is it to keep her warm? Is it just an aesthetic thing?* She hoped her smile didn’t betray her thoughts. One look at Ana shot down her hope.

Lena suddenly seemed very tired and started to yawn. “If it’s alright with you loves, I’d like to get some sleep. It’s been a long couple of days. Being honest, I’m exhausted.” She threw in another yawn for good measure.

Ana stood up from her seat. “Let’s all go inside then. I’ll walk you over to your room.” When everyone was inside, she closed the door behind her. “I hope the rest of your night goes well Angela.” She gave a wink to the blonde and walked off with Lena in tow.

Angela smiled at the retreating form of the older woman and started to head towards her own room. She started to hum a made-up melody and skipped along to the beat. She hadn’t felt this good in a while. She wanted to hold onto the feeling for a little bit longer.

When she made it to her room she went straight for the wardrobe and picked out some sleeping clothes. Angela caught her reflection in the mirror and paused. Her feather hair accessory was lopsided, some of the golden feathers were either smudged or chipped away, her hair was

flattened in one area and strewn about in others, but the best part was the occasional blue feather that colored her dress. When she turned around, she could see more blue feathers littering the back of her dress. She grinned at the memory of Fareeha holding her close, the scent of sycamore trees close to her skin. When she closed her eyes, she could feel those arms wrapped around her.

She liked listening to Fareeha's voice. She liked being close to Fareeha. She liked the feeling of Fareeha's skin touching hers. She liked it and... Bringing a hand up to her face, she felt her lips with feather light touches. She liked it and it felt so *good*

When she opened her eyes, Angela took another look in the mirror to admire the blue feathers that covered her dress. Smiling at the image, she gathered her clothes and headed out to go take a bath. *I do say, that was a little indulgent.* She rounded a corner and continued forward. *But, I suppose it's healthy to indulge every now and then. Especially when the person of my affections is so beautiful, inside and out.* When she arrived at the bathroom, she immediately started the water.

While she waited for the tub to fill, she started to trace the feather patterns. She traced the ones Fareeha painted, her efforts making them more beautiful than the ones she painted herself. She smirked at the memory of Fareeha's intense blush when she started painting Angela's thigh. She didn't want to deter the obviously flustered woman so she didn't say anything. Instead, she focused on painting her own feathers and stealing glances at the blushing woman.

When the water filled the tub enough, Angela turned the water off. Peeling off her clothes, she started washing her hair first. Running a comb through her blonde hair, she got rid of the day's knots. After her hair was clean, she relished the soothing heat of the water. Her favorite part was drifting off into her thoughts as the hot steam soothed her aches away. Leaning her head back, she spread her arms out on the edges of the tub to support herself and drifted off.

She thought about the various medical studies taking place back at the research hospital. Most of the trials should still be in progress and she was curious about what trials were approved in her absence. She thought about how there were so many promising medical professionals that she turned down because there was someone more promising. *Maybe I should try and coordinate an expansion in other cities. Fareeha would probably give the go ahead for Egypt.*

Picking up her washcloth, she started to scrub away the lingering paint. Golden swirls colored the once clear water. Angela sighed as she scrubbed the last of the paint away. *They were such beautiful feathers.* She started to empty the tub.

When she climbed out of the tub, she toweled off the excess water from her hair. She toweled off her body and after putting on a pair of underwear, she pulled on her night slip. She ran the towel through her hair again to speed up the drying process. Angela wrapped the towel around her shoulders and started for her room. The only noise in the hallway was the sound of her slippers scraping against the ground.

Angela reached her room and sighed. Today's events had her wired. She knew that trying to sleep now would be hopeless. She opened the door anyway. She had to at least try. Placing her used clothes in the clothes basket she turned off her wall lamp and walked out of her slippers and onto the bed. Placing the covers over her body, Angela tried to sleep. She tried to blank out her steady stream of thoughts to no avail. When she started counting back from one thousand, her heart rate would pick up and she'd lose count. Even staying still was a challenge. Her joints ached for movement.

To top it all off, she couldn't get a certain retired captain out of her head. The look in Fareeha's eyes on that hilltop was enchanting. She looked at Angela like there was no one else there. She could see the care, patience, and want in her eyes. When they kissed, a spark of lightning shot through her body. If she concentrated enough, she could still feel the sparks.

“What I want is...” The kiss replayed over and over in her head. “I want to see her.” She clutched at her blankets to try and keep still. *It’s been a long day, she’s probably tired.* Ana’s comment from earlier rang in her mind. *“I hope the rest of your night goes well Angela.”* She ran a frustrated hand through her semi-damp hair. That wink she gave before leaving with Lena. She *knew* what the doctor wanted.

Angela massaged her closed eyelids for a bit before caving in. She sat up with a huff and climbed out of the bed. Putting on her slippers, she walked to the wardrobe and grabbed a cover-up. Slipping on the short, thin robe Angela walked over to the door and headed out towards Fareeha’s room.

When she arrived at Fareeha’s door, she put her hand on the wood and kept it there. She could tell that the other woman was still awake from the light shining through the bottom. Angela balled up her fist and gave a small knock. She didn’t expect Fareeha would be able to hear it but the muffled ‘Come in’ proved her wrong. Turning the knob, she opened the door and saw Fareeha bent over toweling her damp hair.

When the taller woman straightened up, she saw that it was Angela at her door. The doctor was giving her a shy smile while she leaned in the doorway. “You can come in you know.”

Angela lifted off from the doorframe and closed the door behind her. Her smile grew and she raised a hand to wave at Fareeha. “Hi.” She mentally berated herself for her lackluster response.

Fareeha chuckled at the suddenly nervous doctor. Setting her towel on a chair, she walked over to Angela, taking hold of one of her hands. “You sound nervous.”

Angela just nodded. “Does it have something to do about coming here in the middle of the night?”

Angela nodded again and squeezed her hand. Fareeha gave a smile in response. “It’s okay if you want to see me.” She guided them to the bed and sat down. Skooching towards the middle of the bed, Fareeha patted the spot next to her. “Please get comfortable. If I’m being honest with you, I wanted to spend more time with you too.”

Angela seemed relieved to hear what Fareeha said and climbed in next to her. She enclosed Fareeha’s hand in her own hands and brought it up to her lips. Gently kissing the back of her hand, she smiled into the warm skin. She then lowered their hands to speak. “I was feeling a little embarrassed that I wanted to see you so badly. Even though we just spent the day together, I still wanted more time with you.”

“Well, it was a pretty great day.” Fareeha wiggled her fingers for emphasis. “I got to spend the day with a woman who has both an insatiable sweet tooth and an electric kiss.”

Angela’s heart pounded at that. *She felt it too.*

Fareeha didn’t notice Angela’s epiphany moment so she continued. “The best part is that this woman wants to spend more time with me.” She pushed blonde locks behind Angela’s ear. “I thought she might have had enough of me for the night.”

Angela lifted herself on an elbow and looked down to Fareeha. “That’s not going to happen. At least not for tonight.” She reached a hand out to cup a cheek and leaned down for a kiss. It was soft and gentle. Angela pulled away slightly when Fareeha pulled her back in to deepen the kiss. Angela felt those strong hands leave her face and find her waist. One moment she was lying to the side of Fareeha, the next she was on top of her, straddling her waist. Angela giggled at the sudden change in position.

Fareeha took both of Angela's hands in her own and smiled up at the doctor. "Kiss me again?" She let go of her hands in favor of trailing touches along Angela's sleeved arms.

Angela untied the cover-up and quickly shrugged it off her shoulders. She wanted to feel that skin on skin contact she craved. She cupped Fareeha's face with both hands and leaned in for another kiss. Angela closed her eyes and could feel those hands trail along the exposed skin of her arms and she shuddered into the kiss.

They got lost in each other. When Angela parted her lips, Fareeha deepened the kiss further. She felt a warm tongue against hers and the sparks intensified. As their tongues danced, Angela could feel her body vibrating. Being with Fareeha like this felt so good that she couldn't help it. She let out a moan.

Fareeha broke the kiss and opened her eyes to look up into Angela's. With their foreheads still touching she brought one of Angela's hands to her chest. She pressed the hand against her skin, her fast beating heart threatening to burst from its place. "Can you feel that?"

Angela could feel the deep thumping from under Fareeha's soft skin. "Yes." She concentrated on the fast heartbeat. "It's so strong." Angela could feel her own heartbeat start to match Fareeha's.

"This is what you do to me." She pressed the hand closer to her chest. "That's how it felt like when we were at the festival together. That's how it felt like when you took care of me. That's how it felt like when we were floating with the waves." She brought the hand up to her lips and kissed the inside of her palm. "That's what it felt like when I first saw you."

Angela was burning up. For a few seconds, all she could hear was the blood pumping in her ears. "Fareeha." She peered down into expressive brown eyes. They were sparkling and warm. She trailed a finger along red swelled lips, enjoying the sensation of the warm skin running beneath her touch. Angela smiled when those lips kissed the pad of her finger. She lifted her hand away and reached for the jet black tattoo beneath Fareeha's eye, slowly tracing the pattern over a couple of times. "Just hold me close, so I can listen."

Angela stretched out so that she nestled into Fareeha's side. She rested her head on Fareeha's chest, the sound of a strong heartbeat encompassing her thoughts. She felt an arm wrap around her shoulders, pulling her closer. Gentle hands traced light, warm patterns along her outstretched arm and she sighed blissfully at the touch.

They stayed like that in silence. Fareeha enjoying the weight of the doctor against her side. Every now and then she could feel lips pressed into a smile above her heart. The vibration from soft humming spreading out in pulses across her chest. She'd reach up to run her fingers along soft blonde hair, heartbeat picking up when she heard a pleased sigh.

The silence broke when Fareeha asked a question. "Earlier, when you with my mother, what was it you were saying that made her so happy?"

Angela gave a thoughtful hum. "Well, she asked me something and I answered."

Fareeha gave an amused smile. "Angela."

The doctor snuggled closer and relented. "Okay, okay." She closed her eyes before continuing. "She asked me again if I would marry you." Angela could hear the blood pumping in her ears, her face warming up rapidly. "I said yes."

Angela opened her eyes when she heard the increased heart rate; the fast palpitations making it sound like it skipped a beat. She felt Fareeha shift from beneath her so that she was laying on her

side. She immediately missed the warm skin her cheek was previously pressed against but when blue eyes met glistening brown, she didn't mind the separation too much. She reached out to wipe away tears that threatened to spill down.

"You said yes."

She brushed her thumb underneath dampening eyelids. "I did." Eyelashes fluttered against her thumb. "Although, a certain someone hasn't asked me yet so it's not official or anything."

"Angela."

She watched as Fareeha tried to contain her smile. "Hmm?"

"Will you..." Fareeha leaned in closer, pushing blonde strands away from Angela's face. "Will you marry me?"

Angela's smile reached her teeth. "Yes." She stilled the hand trailing along her hairline and leaned in for a quick kiss.

Fareeha chuckled to herself when Angela pulled away. "Here I was thinking you would want more time. It might be later down the road that you decide that you don't like my sense of humor."

"Well...if I change my mind, I'll be sure to tell you."

"What if you change your mind after we're married?"

"Divorce."

"And what if I wouldn't want a divorce?"

"You don't seem the type to force me to stay married to you." Fareeha nodded her head in agreement. "Although, all this talk about 'what ifs' makes it seem like you don't want to get married."

"I'm just making sure. I have delicate feelings you know."

Angela laughed at Fareeha's explanation. "I've gathered as much." She noticed that the other woman had stopped tearing up. "But, I have a feeling it was so that you'd stop yourself from crying." She watched as brown eyes widened in shock.

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"H-how...how did you know?"

"I'm very observant." Angela got closer and gently pushed Fareeha back into her previous position so she could nuzzle against her side again. She buried her face in the crook of Fareeha's neck. "You shouldn't worry about it. I like your delicate feelings."

"Yeah?"

"MmHm." Angela tapped her fingers along Fareeha's shirt covered stomach. "So when do I get a ring?"

"Well, you don't get just *one*."

Angela was very intrigued by this. "How many do I get?"

Fareeha flickered her gaze across the room before looking back to the top of Angela's head.  
"Three."

Angela lifted her face from Fareeha's neck, her hair tickling the underside of the other woman's jaw. "Do I wear them all at once?"

"Well, you usually just wear one. The other two are for special occasions."

"And if I decide that every day is a special occasion?"

"Then who am I to say that you can't wear your three rings?"

Angela giggled at the response and buried her face back in the crook of Fareeha's neck. "I'll get you a ring too. Of course, after I get all three of mine. I need to coordinate the color scheme. I'll take Hana and Ana with me. It'll be a family outing."

Fareeha wrapped her arms around Angela at the mention of family. She felt the smile pressed against her neck when she tightened her hold. "Stay with me tonight?"

"I was hoping you'd ask."

-

It was pitch black outside. The only source of light in the room was the occasional lightning flare from the storm outside and a flickering lamp, its form having fallen sideways onto the floor. Amelié had been standing, watching mesmerized as the time ticked by. A knife in one hand, the blood having been wiped away.

The man named Zul lied dead on the floor, his blood pooled beneath him. Amelié had been standing off to the side for nearly an hour. All the live in staff were asleep, leaving her to relive the memory in relative peace. Over the years, she had become transfixed on her kills. It became a ritual to just observe and relive the final moments where her targets would take their last breath. She shuddered as the thought passed through her mind again.

The storm helped to drown out her entrance. Preferring to get in through the back door, she picked the lock quickly and headed leisurely towards her target. From earlier observation, she knew he was in his quarters, sealing a stack of envelopes at his desk. She was soaked to the bone, the rain water having no effect on her as she focused on her objective.

Silently turning the knob, she entered the room. Her target was right where she saw him last. Hunched over his desk pouring wax on the backs on envelopes. She slammed the door shut; what fun would there be if he didn't get a chance to fight back? Taking a knife from within her sleeve, Amelié stood with her feet planted apart and watched as the target knocked over the hot wax in fear.

Getting up from his chair, the started to reach for something. *Too slow.*

Amelié flicked her knife at a lightning fast speed towards the outstretched hand. It sliced the skin where thumb met forefinger before embedding itself on the wall. "That was just a taste. There's more blood to be spilled."

Zul pulled his hand towards his body, desperate to stop the blood from spilling. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Oh dear, didn't you get my letter?"

His eyes widened in recognition. "Then what they were saying is true." The blood drained from his face. "You're here for me."

Amelié started a leisurely pace towards the man. "If you want, you can try to run. It's no fun when my targets just give up." She observed the man trying to inch his way towards a drawer. "You need to go faster if you don't want to die." He seemed to find his speed when he frantically grabbed the handle and opened the drawer. She could hear the shuffling of papers and various office supplies before a black pistol was aimed straight for her face. Her lips morphed into a frown. "I said to run. That won't help you."

Zul squeezed the trigger and watched as Amelié barely moved out of the way. "With how slow you pull the trigger, you're never going to actually hit anyone, let alone myself." She surged forward, kicking the gun out of his hand; using the momentum to grab his arm she slammed him into the ground, the lamp on the desk falling to the floor from all the movement. She could hear him muttering quiet words. "I'd let you have your final words but I just remembered that I don't give a damn." She grabbed him by the hair and lifted his head from the ground. The knife that suddenly appeared in her hand quickly found its way to his carotid artery and sliced through it with ease.

Amelié slammed his head back onto the floor; she pressed a knee into his back and strengthened her grip. A pool of blood started to form on the ground. She pressed his face impossibly closer to the floor, the feeling of the erratic shuddering of his body as he gasped and struggled was maddening. When Amelié felt his body slacken and just as his last breath left his body, she closed her eyes, breathed in deeply, and let go of his head. She leaned back a little and smiled up at the ceiling.

And then she got up. Straightening out her clothes, Amelié walked over to the bed post and leaned on it. She watched the puddle of blood expand in an outflowing circle. She saw the red color slowly expand onto the rug that sat beneath the bed. The fibers greedily absorbing the thick liquid. She closed her eyes again and thought of her kill. She opened them back up right as she imagined his last breath, the sight of the motionless body on the floor adding to the experience. She felt so alive.

An hour had passed of her just leaning on the bed post, reliving her kill over and over again. The sound of branches hitting against the window pane broke the spell. Amelié walked over to the wall and retrieved her knife. It wouldn't do to leave her tools behind. One last look at her kill and she made her way to the window. Opening it up, water started to pour into the room. The cold droplets didn't faze her as she jumped out the window and headed over the wall she scaled earlier.

She walked for five minutes before headlights shined before her. Amelié could recognize her quiet partner's face anywhere. Just as the car pulled up in front of her, she reached for the door handle and sat down inside. She felt something brush against her arm and turned to see Hanzo holding out a towel for her.

"There will be an election in two days. Once they find the body, the funeral will be held tomorrow and the election will follow the next day," said Hanzo. He watched as Amelié toweled off her hair. "I take things went well on your end. You were smiling."

Her smile widened. "The kill never disappoints." She finished with her hair and wrapped the towel around her shoulders. "We're to head back to Talon. Our mission's done here." She reclined in her seat and closed her eyes. "You're driving."

Hanzo didn't respond. He took the car out of park and started on the road back.

Lena woke up the next morning feeling more refreshed. Two days sleeping in a bed was just what she needed. Jumping out of bed she stretched a bit before heading to the wardrobe. Last night, Ana had given her some clothes to wear saying that she looked like she just climbed out of hell. Smiling at the thought, Lena grabbed some fresh clothes and changed. She opted for a long-sleeved shirt but still chose to wear shorts since her knees were especially tender from her burns. Putting on her shoes, she headed out.

It was a good ten minutes before she realized that she was lost. Lena felt like she was going everywhere and nowhere. She managed to find her room three times but the dining room was a mystery. Just as she was about to give up hope, a sleepy looking Hana came out of a room. The girl noticed her when she stopped rubbing at her eyes.

“Good morning.” She yawned.

”I sure am glad to see you. This place is a maze.”

“I got lost my first time here too. Follow me and we can eat breakfast.” She turned away from Lena and started walking. “It’s the only reason I get up so early.”

Lena sped up to catch up. “So I heard your mum is getting married.”

Hana stopped in her tracks and suddenly looked very awake. “What?!”

“Ana told me last night.”

Hana started moving again. “Are you sure that wasn’t just nana messing around?”

“Nope ‘cause Angela confirmed that she would marry your mum.”

Hana seemed more energized after hearing that. She started quietly singing to herself; the chorus mainly consisted of ‘two mamas’ over and over again. It was pretty catchy. “I’m going to make a detour.” The girl started off in a sprint, Lena following after her.

They ran through what seemed like an endless hallway before Hana stopped in front of a door. She danced on her toes before knocking. When she didn’t hear a response, she opened the door anyway. Lena stayed at the doorway and watched Hana head over towards the big bed. When the girl got close enough, she suddenly stopped and turned towards Lena. She started frantically pointing to the bed and let out silent exclamations of joy. Lena walked over to see what all the fuss was about.

When she neared closed enough, Lena could see that Angela and Fareeha were curled up together underneath the covers. *Reminds me of how lovey-dovey they are at base.*

“Tell me you’re seeing what I’m seeing,” said Hana.

“They are definitely cuddling under there.”

Angela stirred beneath the covers and cracked open an eye. She snuggled deeper into Fareeha’s warm body and placed a sleepy kiss on the woman’s cheek. It was when she heard a high pitched squeal that she started to focus her sleep blurred vision. She looked over to the edge of the bed and nearly jumped out of her skin. Two steps away from her side of the bed stood Lena and Hana. Hana clinging excitedly to Lena’s arm, the other woman looking sheepishly at the blonde. “You two nearly scared me to death!” She clutched at her fast beating chest.

Hana let go of Lena’s arm and sat on the bed next to the blonde. “Sorry Angela...” A sly smile

crept onto her face. "Or should I call you mom?"

Angela blushed at that and covered her face with the blanket. She blindly reached out for Fareeha and gently shook her shoulder. "Fareeha, I'm outnumbered here."

The sleeping woman stirred but still didn't wake up. Instead she shifted over onto her side and brought an arm around Angela's waist, pulling the doctor in closer to her.

"Now that's just too sweet," said Lena.

Angela brought the blanket down from her face, her lips now curved in a big smile. Her embarrassment flew out the window when she heard a quiet "Angela" coming from the woman holding her. She ran her fingers along the arm she held her close, coaxing out sleepy murmuring from Fareeha. She sighed and looked back over to Hana and Lena. "She's just so lovely."

Hana shifted on the bed in her excitement. "So it's true isn't it? You're going to marry mama?"

"Yes. According to a trusted source of mine..." She lightly tapped the arm wrapped around her. "I also get three rings."

Hana nodded vigorously at that. "Yes, they're really pretty too." A look of shock covered her face and she quickly tried to cover it up. "I mean from all the ones I've seen. You know, I go to a lot of weddings." She cleared her throat. "Lots of weddings."

Angela's smile changed to a smirk. "So she already has them?" She watched Hana squirm in her seat. "You wouldn't happen to know what color they are?"

Hana quickly jumped off the bed and grabbed a hold of Lena's arm. "You know Angela, Lena here is just starving to death." She looked up at the woman and Lena nodded along in agreement. "So we're just going to go now." Lena was suddenly yanked towards the door. "Good morning by the way. See you at breakfast." Lena barely managed to shut the door before being yanked further down the hall.

"I have to say, there's a lot of surprises happening." *And boy do I have one for all of them.*

Hana's smile returned as they continued down the hall. "It's good news." The dining room could be seen, Ana already sitting at the table with cup in hand. She led Lena to a seat at the table and pulled out the chair for her. "You should eat though." Her gaze flickered to Lena's sun-burned skin. "You look like you've seen better days."

Hana took a seat between Lena and Hana and started filling up the plate in front of her. She piled on a fava bean and cheese mixture and grabbed a piece of bread from the basket on the table. She watched Hana pick up an empty bowl and fill it with a milky rice mixture.

"I promise it's good." Ana had put her cup down. "You should eat Lena."

"Of course, yeah." She grabbed a bowl and scooped in some of the rice mixture. Sitting back down again, she started eating. The taste was very homey, Lena found herself eating faster. "This is good," she said between bites.

A tea cup was placed in front of Lena. She watched as Ana went back to her seat. "Have some tea too."

"Thank you. I absolutely love tea." Lena stopped eating to sip at the offered beverage. She continued drinking it after tasting the master level flavor. It reminded her of the tea the Ana back home would make. "Ana, this is really good."

“Thank you dear.” The older woman glanced down to Hana shoveling food into her mouth, taking fast sips of tea between bites. “I’m glad someone appreciates it.”

Lena laughed at what Ana was obviously referring to. “D.va does the same thing back home.”

Hana paused her eating. “I heard the news nana.” She took a couple more bites. “You should have seen them this morning. They already look married.”

Ana’s smile reached her eye. “I’m happy for them too.” She glanced over to the movement in the distance. Angela was slowly leading a sleepy Fareeha towards the dining room. They both still wore their sleep attire. “I’ve always wanted another daughter.”

Ana started making a new cup of tea. Just as Fareeha was led to the chair next to her, she placed the full cup in front of her daughter’s empty plate. “Drink up, it won’t do for you to fall asleep at the table.” She leaned over and quickly kissed her cheek. “Good morning.”

Fareeha took the offered cup and started drinking the warm tea. When half of it was gone, she seemed to be more awake. Leaning over, she kissed her mother back. “Good morning.” She started putting some of the cheese and bean mixture on her plate. When she grabbed a piece of bread, she noticed Lena. “I’m so sorry for being rude. Good morning Lena.”

The woman in question waved it off. “Don’t worry about it. You look like you just got up.”

Fareeha smiled over to Angela. “Truth be told, I didn’t want to get up. I was very comfortable where I was.”

They ate in comfortable silence. Lena would observe as Angela sneaked a peak at Fareeha every now and then. The blonde would look up at the other woman’s mussed hair and smile back down at her plate. Lena thought it was cute; the two of them reminding her of home.

“So Lena,” Angela started. “Have you been traveling around? What brings you to Egypt?”

“Well you see...” She looked over to Ana, the older woman nodded her head. “You’re right that I’m not from here.” She put down her spoon and clasped her hands together. “I’m actually not even from this world.”

Angela was looking at the woman like she was delusional.

“Now, I see that look your giving me. I promise it’s not all in my head.” She pointed over to Ana. “As I explained to Ana last night, I’m actually from another world that’s sort of like this one but different.”

Angela gave Ana a perplexed look. She still didn’t buy into the story. “And how am I supposed to know that you’re not making this all up?”

“Well, for one...” She tapped on the accelerator. “This isn’t a lightbulb.”

Angela, Fareeha, and Hana all seemed curious at the mention of the not-lightbulb. “Then what is it?” asked Fareeha.

“It’s called a chronal accelerator. It keeps me from...fading away.” She tapped it a couple more times. “But that’s not the only thing it does.” Getting up from the chair she sat in Lena continued. “I can control a bit of my own time.”

“Control?” asked Angela.

After a quick go ahead from Ana, Lena blinked into the kitchen and was suddenly sitting back in her chair, a bowl of figs in hand. She placed the bowl in a stunned Hana's hands. "I can speed up and reverse my own time. Albeit, a few seconds at a time."

Hana seemed to finally move. "You all saw that right?" The others nodded in agreement. "That... was so cool!"

Lena smiled at Hana's enthusiasm. "Back in my world, my accelerator was acting a bit weird. Then all of the sudden I was falling out of the sky and landed in the ocean in Alexandria." She cleared her throat and continued. "I met this surprisingly nice newspaper lady and found out about the festival. I recognized your name Fareeha so I thought I'd look for you to see if you could help me."

Fareeha found her voice at the mention of her name. "Me?"

Lena nodded. "Back home, you are all there. We work together in an organization called Overwatch." She gestured to Fareeha, Angela, and Hana. "You three go by different call signs when we're out in the field." She pointed over to Ana. "Ana is just Ana."

Angela seemed very intrigued at the new information. "So, you're saying that there's another version of me on some other world?"

"Yeah, all of you are there and you all act surprisingly similar." She focused on Fareeha first. "You Fareeha fly around all day in a big o' blue bird suit called the Raptora. Protecting the innocent and 'raining justice from above', you go by Pharah."

Fareeha's jaw dropped at the mention of Pharah. Lena chuckled at that and continued. "You Angela, are also a doctor. Not just any doctor though. You fly around with a halo perched on your head, bringing people back to life with your caduceus staff. You go by Mercy."

"This other me can resurrect people from the dead?" Angela was very intrigued by this information.

"Yep. Gunshot wound or a fatal stabbing doesn't matter. As long as they weren't dead for long, you can bring them back."

Lena turned to Hana, she watched as the girl was bubbling over in anticipation. "You're actually really famous. People from all over the world love you. You fight in a giant pink rabbit." Hana nearly fell over in excitement. "You go by D.va."

Hana fist pumped the air. "Other me sounds so cool."

"And like I told Ana last night, she's a founding member of Overwatch and a brilliant sniper to boot." Lena cleared her throat again. "We all actually spend a lot of time together. More of a family really." She looked back over to Fareeha. "That's why I wanted to find you. If you were anything like the Fareeha I know, I knew I had a chance of finding some help."

"Are you trying to find a way back home? I don't know if I can help with that," said Fareeha.

Lena huffed in her seat. "I really don't know if I'll ever get back home if I'm being honest with you. I was just looking for something familiar in a world I know nothing about. I was really grateful when Ana said I could be a guest here."

Fareeha seemed to process this information. Her heart went out to the other woman. She felt the familiar urge to help. She reached across the table and placed her palm over Lena's. The other woman looked up at the familiar touch. "Be our guest, for as long as you want."

Ana smiled at her daughter's kindness. "You see Lena, I told you it would work out."

Lena was tearing up and opted just to nod her head. "Thank you."

When Fareeha sat back down, she studied the other woman for a bit. "So from what you said, we all fight together in your world?" Lena nodded at that. "So you know some hand to hand combat?"

"I don't know if it's the same here but I do know some moves."

Fareeha seemed to think about her next words. "Would you mind teaching Hana then? You can be a tutor of sorts."

Lena brightened up at the prospect of doing something useful. "Yes of course! I can do that."

Hana's eyes lit up. She saw that Lena's bowl was empty so she got up from her chair and started to drag Lena away from her chair. "Let's start now! You can tell me all about other me while we're at it." Lena didn't get a chance to respond before she was dragged away and out of sight.

Ana laughed at Lena's sudden exit. "I think if there's anyone that can make Lena feel more comfortable, it's Hana. The girl really knows how to show enthusiasm." She turned towards Fareeha and Angela. "So breaking news aside, I take it your night went well Angela."

The doctor blushed at the comment. "Ah, yes actually." She reached out for Fareeha's hand and rubbed circles inside her palm with a thumb. "I told Fareeha."

Ana nearly spilled over her third cup of tea. "And...?"

Fareeha's smile widened at her mother's excitement. "It's official."

Ana almost tripped over in her rush to get out of the chair. She hurried to the two of them and wrapped her arms around them. Pulling them in tighter, she could feel the tears streaming down her face. "I had a good feeling about you two." She kissed both of their foreheads. "You're making an old woman so happy."

Ana loosened her hold and looked into her daughter's smiling eyes. "When are you going to give Angela her rings? There needs to be a big ceremony. Everyone in Egypt's invited."

"Mother..."

Ana ignored Fareeha's plea. "You like sweets right Angela?" The doctor nodded. "I'll get the best bakery to make your favorites." She pulled them in tight again. "I'm just so happy."

Angela managed to lift her face to speak to Ana. "I actually wanted to take you and Hana with me to get a ring for Fareeha. After the big ceremony that everyone's invited to of course." She felt her face disappear into the fabric of Ana's light coat again.

"Yes, yes. Of course I'll go with you." She let go of both women, Fareeha taking in a deep breath when she was finally released. "Right now though, I need to start planning." She went back to her cup and quickly finished her tea. "You two go spend more time together. I have a wedding to plan."

Angela watched as Ana disappeared down the hall. "I think that went well." She felt warm lips press against her cheek.

"Trust me on this, she's just getting started."

After breakfast, Angela and Fareeha left the dining room to change into more suitable clothing. Fareeha was just about to knock on Angela's door when the woman in mention opened it. She was wearing her hat and scarf with a white dress. Angela smiled when she was met with Fareeha holding her fist up to knock.

"Fareeha, I was just about to go get you." She took the raise armed in her hands and started leading them down the hall.

"Are we going somewhere?"

"Not really, I just wanted to walk along the river with you."

"Then by all means lead the way."

Angela giggled at that and started walking in front, gently leading Fareeha along. "Follow me, I know a secret route."

Fareeha found that there wasn't actually a secret route. They just went through the gardens. She went along with it anyway. "Wow, Angela. This place is beautiful."

Angela's smiled reached her eyes when Fareeha played along. "Only the best view for you." When they reached the river, she slowed down to walk by Fareeha's side. "And here we are."

They sun reflected on the water's surface highlighted Angela's outline, it's golden rays enhancing her profile. "And what a sight it is."

They walked the river's edge for a while. They're light banter and playful touches filling the time from late morning to mid-afternoon. Angela stopped walking when she set her eyes on a flower patch. She patted Fareeha's arm and motioned towards the flowers. "Over there."

Fareeha saw what Angela was pointing to and headed towards the flower patch. She watched as Angela ran ahead. The doctor's smile grew smaller when she looked at the flowers for a bit. "Is there something wrong?"

"Well, it's just that I want to sit down but my dress will get stained. I'd sit on the scarf but I don't want it to get ruined either."

Fareeha peered down at the patch of flowers before finding a spot to sit. She reached her hand up for Angela to take. Angela took the offered hand and soon found herself sitting in Fareeha's lap. She took off her hat to get more comfortable. "Better?"

Angela turned into Fareeha and gave her a quick kiss. "Much better." She carefully picked some flowers and started weaving them together. "I made you a flower crown at the festival yesterday but after thinking about it, I realized that I wanted one too. So now..." She placed the some more carefully picked flowers into Fareeha's hands that rested loosely on Angela's legs. "We can make each other one."

Fareeha gently placed most of the flowers on the ground and started to weave the few she kept in her hands. She lowered her chin on Angela's shoulder to get a closer look at her work. Angela kissed her cheek and set to work as well, her hands working above Fareeha's.

Fareeha found that she was very absorbed in her task. The prospect of making the perfect flower crown for Angela had her very motivated to take her time and perfect her work. She paused when

she heard a familiar tune being hummed by Angela.

“That’s...my mother’s song.”

Angela stopped working as well. “I nearly forgot she told me that. It was so long ago when I first heard it.” She hummed a few bars of the melody. “She used to sing it to me when I was younger.”

Fareeha didn’t respond.

Angela realized what she said. *That was during the war.*

“It is bringing up bad memories? Should I stop?”

Fareeha shook her head no. “No, it been so long since I’ve heard it. I forgot how much I liked it.” She started working on the flower crown again. “You can keep humming it. It sounds nice.”

So Angela hummed the old song and continued working as well. Every now and then, she would compare her work to Fareeha’s and found that Fareeha’s crown was intricate and beautiful compared to hers. She would be jealous but she remembered that she’d be the one wearing it so she didn’t mind as much.

“You’re very talented in making flower crowns. Maybe you should switch careers. Go full time.”

“As tempting as that sounds, I think I do a pretty bang up job at my current one.” She placed the finished product atop Angela’s head. “Although, maybe after retiring. The crown does look really nice.”

Angela gently touched the crown and started to get up. Turning back around to face Fareeha, she leaned over and placed the crown on her head as well. She smiled down at Fareeha, the flowers making the woman look more endearing. Then she was pulled forward. She landed on top of Fareeha, the other woman keeping her from touching the ground.

Fareeha guided their lips into a sweet kiss. The sight of the sun illuminating blonde hair softly blowing in the wind made Fareeha feel helplessly drawn to Angela. The doctor’s smile as she pulled away from the kiss made her go weak in the knees. Fareeha was glad that she was already laying down.

“Careful now, Fareeha. I might start thinking that you like me.”

Fareeha leaned up for a quick peck. “That’s okay. I don’t mind you thinking that.”

Angela slowly started to climb off Fareeha. When she got up on her feet, she took hold of Fareeha’s hand and pulled her up along with her. “Let’s go back. We walked pretty far.”

Fareeha bent over and picked up Angela’s hat. With their hands still connected, she started leading the way back. “Today was both perfect and perplexing. On one hand, I got to spend the day with you and on the other, there’s apparently another world where I hopefully spend the day with you as well. It’s nothing short of incredible.”

“If this other Angela is anything like myself, she’d fall for you there as well.”

Angela was daydreaming on the walk back. She barely noticed when they reached the path that would take them back to the gardens. She stopped and turned her head to look at the water, an idea forming in her head. “Say Fareeha, how do you feel about going for a swim?”

Fareeha squeezed the doctor’s hand. “I wouldn’t mind.”

“Then it’s settled.” Angela got closer to the river, Fareeha in tow. She leaned over to look at her reflection. She could see the reflections of both herself and Fareeha. The sight was beautiful, flower crowns enhancing the image. Angela made a mental note to sketch the moment later. She took off her shoes and folded the scarf, placing it next to her shoes. Reluctantly, she took off the flower crown and placed it on top of her scarf. “You should go in first.”

“Why’s that?” Fareeha placed her flower crown on top of Angela’s.

“So I don’t get my dress dirty from the riverbank.” She saw the smirk forming on Fareeha’s lip.

“You want me to pick you up.” Angela grinned at getting caught. “If that’s the case, why don’t I just carry you with me?”

“That could work” She watched as Fareeha squatted down in front of her.

“Climb on.”

“You’re not going to carry me in your strong arms?”

“Normally I would but...wouldn’t want to risk getting your dress dirty.” Suddenly arms were wrapped around her shoulders. She felt Angela’s legs around her sides.

“I’m ready.”

Fareeha slowly stood up, she slid her arms beneath Angela’s knees for support before taking a step. Comfortable that she wasn’t going to slip, she started to back up from the river. Angela held Fareeha closer when they started going in the wrong direction.

“Fareeha whe-“ Before she could finish her sentence, Fareeha took off in a run. She held on impossibly tighter when she realized what was going to happen. *She tricked me!* They were rapidly approaching the water, the thrill of what came next making her heart go wild. For a moment, Angela felt weightless. She let out a shriek when they came crashing down, the water splashed in different directions.

The water cushioned Fareeha’s landing. She landed on her feet before sinking to her knees with the added weight from Angela. She could barely hear the doctor’s outburst, the water surrounding her head drowning out the noise. When she stood back up again, Angela was laughing. She joined in, their laughter making ripples in the water. She let go of Angela’s knees, but the other woman didn’t relinquish her hold.

“You tricked me.” She kissed the back of Fareeha’s ear. “I could have died you know.”

“I would never let that happen.” Angela tried to lean back but Fareeha wouldn’t budge. “You can try all you want. Hana has been trying for years and still hasn’t been able to dunk me. Your stunt at the beach was just luck.”

Angela released her hold on Fareeha and stood on her own feet. “You’re safe...for now.” She waded to Fareeha’s front and splashed the resilient woman. Fareeha looked stunned before joining in the splash fight.

Fareeha would duck under the water to avoid getting splashed. Angela laughed at the concept since either way she was still going to get wet. At one point, Fareeha managed to sneak behind Angela after ducking into the water. Angela felt arms wrap around her waist and got a good view of the sky before plunging into the water. When she broke through the surface, she came face to face with a smirking Fareeha.

“That’s how you do it.” She got water splashed in her face in return. She reached out for Angela’s hand, pulling the woman closer to her. Angela refused to meet her gaze. “Angela…”

From behind Fareeha, she could see Hana sneaking into the water. She motioned for Angela to stay quiet and gestured towards Fareeha then to the water. Angela got the message and looked back to Fareeha.

“Forgive me?”

Angela smiled at the puppy dog eyes and pulling on Fareeha’s shirt to bring her closer. “Maybe.” Grabbing her shoulders, Angela pulled in Fareeha for a kiss. She got lost for a moment, the sensation to good not to enjoy. When she pulled back, she saw the dazed look in Fareeha’s eyes. Behind Fareeha stood Hana, ready to make her move. Angela gave the go ahead.

Fareeha felt someone jump onto her back, their legs wrapping around her torso. Her body was being tipped backwards so she steadied her stance. That’s when she saw the wicked smile on Angela’s face, the doctor’s hand reaching up to push her backwards.

“Now you’re forgiven.”

She was plunged into the water, the sky distorting as the water clouded her vision. The arms and legs that wrapped around her body let go, leaving her the freedom to pop back up to the surface. She stayed submerged for a few more seconds, the shock of betrayal still wearing off.

Fareeha stood back up after recuperating from defeat. She saw Hana celebrating with Angela. The two high fiving and doing some made up victory dance.

“Bet you didn’t see that coming mama. Too busy smooching with Angela to notice me.” She snickered at Fareeha’s stammering.

The flustered woman sighed in defeat. “You got me.” A glint started to glimmer in her eye. “But you know Hana, I have no problem dunking you.”

The girl stopped her gloating and blanched at the realization. She tried to scramble away but Fareeha already had a hold of her. She was scooped up and promptly thrown into the water. When she emerged from the water she tried to warn Angela. “Angela run!”

Angela stopped giggling at Hana’s predicament when she saw Fareeha coming towards her. She tried to reason with the woman. “Look Fareeha, you don’t have to do this. Just consider us even.”

“Uh, huh. Even.” She surged forward and wrapped Angela in her arms. She readjusted her hold so that Angela was being carried in her arms. “Don’t worry, it’ll be over fast.” She leaned in for a quick kiss and then tossed the woman into the water, a shriek following Angela’s path.

Back at the gardens, Lena and Ana were watching the scene unfold.

“You know Ana, back home, Angela and Fareeha act like that too.” She smiled when she saw Angela hit the water. “Maybe those two are always meant to be together.”

“That’s a reassuring thought. I wouldn’t be a good matchmaker if they didn’t like each other. But I’ve known Angela for a while so I knew it would work out.”

“It was you that set them up?”

Ana had a glint of pride in her eye. “I have an eye for these sorts of things.” Her expression turned more serious. “Lena, I think enough time has passed. Fareeha needs to know about Talon. If

they're anything like the Talon you know, she needs to start planning for what could happen."

"I'll try to help anyway I can."

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After a few more hours and a fresh set of dry clothing, Hana, Angela, and Fareeha were all seated at the dinner table. They were talking excitedly about their day. Hana telling Fareeha about the results of her training with Lena.

"Next time we practice together mama, I'll show you this new move Lena taught me. It's guaranteed to knock you off your feet."

"Really now?" Fareeha glanced over to Lena who gave a shrug in response.

Angela was observing the exchange with a smile. She rested a reassuring hand on Fareeha's arm. "Don't worry. If Hana manages to take you out, I'll be there to kiss it better."

Fareeha seemed happy with that. "Do I still get a kiss if she doesn't knock me off my feet?"

"As many as you want."

They went back to eating. Throughout dinner, Lena would look over to Ana to gauge when to bring up Talon. It was when she looked again that Ana gave a subtle nod.

"Fareeha, have heard of Talon?"

Fareeha tried to wrack her brain for something but came up empty. "I can't say that I have."

"Back home they are this group that's been taking out key players. As of now, I don't know what their real agenda is but from what I've heard, there's a Talon here too."

Fareeha's expression turned serious. She looked over to Ana. "And what have you heard mother?"

"There have been new leaders being sworn in. The previous leader having been found dead in their home." She quickly glanced over to an uncomfortable looking Angela before continuing. "They send out a letter and after a week, the recipient dies." Ana sighed. "They have only targeted smaller cities for the moment but..."

"You think they will start expanding."

Ana nodded. "I believe Egypt is off limits for now. It would be more reassuring if plans were made for the future. Many of those cities have started organizing a military force even if they were previously neutral."

"They said those were just drills." She pushed away her plate, her hunger having subsided. "But I thought it was suspicious." She tapped her fingers on the table. "I'll send out some observation squads to keep an eye on the situation." Fareeha noticed that Angela seemed nervous. "Are you okay Angela?"

Angela took a bit to respond. "It's just that..." Ana nodded for her to continue. "I got a letter too."

The silence that followed was deafening. Fareeha set her expression into a small frown and just stared at her plate.

"Fareeha? Say something." Angela placed a shaky hand on Fareeha's arm. She felt a little

reassured when she felt a warm hand cover her own. Fareeha stopped looking at her plate and gave Angela a sad smile. She felt a cold shock looking at the expression.

Fareeha let go of Angela's hand and stood up from her chair. "I need to think for a bit." She walked out of the dining room and headed for the stairs.

Hana suddenly lost her appetite and settled for pushing her food around on her plate. They all just sat there in thick silence.

Angela was distraught at what to do. "Ana? What do I do? Is she upset that I didn't tell her sooner?"

Ana gave Angela a reassuring smile. "I think that she cares about what happens to you. This news was probably... I don't think she ever expected this." She sighed before getting up. "As for what you can do, just go to her. She's not going to push you away. It takes much more than this for that to happen."

Angela took Ana's words to heart and decided to go find Fareeha. She left the dining room and headed up the stairs she saw Fareeha go up. She didn't have to look very hard since the woman she was looking for was on the balcony leaning on the railing.

She took tentative steps towards her before leaning on the doorway to the balcony.

"I'm not mad at you." Fareeha turned her head to the side to address Angela. "I'm just worried." She turned back to look at the sky. "I fell for a woman who is smart, caring, and just all around wonderful." She gripped the stone railing and continued. "We're even going to get married."

Fareeha suddenly whipped around. "I fell for you Angela. And now I find out that there's people out there trying to hurt you." Tears started to form in her eyes. "I'm worried because they want to hurt you, they want to hurt me family."

Angela's breath hitched. "I'm part of your family?"

Fareeha let a tear stream down her face and closed the gap between herself and Angela. She brought the woman in a warm embrace. "Yes. You are my family, and you always will be."

Angela let out a shaky breath, the worry leaving her body. All she needed was this moment. Burying her face in the crook of Fareeha's neck, she inhaled the familiar scent and let the moment wash over her.

## Chapter End Notes

I sort of just dumped this chapter here. I'll go over it later to fix any mistakes.

## Chapter Summary

Everyone spends some bonding time.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Angela woke up the next morning, a ray of light shining directly over her eyelids. Trying to send a signal with just her thoughts, the light did not seem to get the message and continued to pester her awake. The battle to stay asleep was a losing one so Angela relented and slowly sat up. She blinked her eyes open a couple of times, stretching her arms into the air. Looking to the empty space next to her, Angela felt a twinge of disappointment.

Last night Fareeha had walked Angela to her room. The memory slowly crept in.

*Angela placed a hand on her door and looked back to Fareeha. "Fareeha..."*

*"Yes?"*

*"This Talon situation. Does that mean that..." Angela suddenly looked nervous.*

*Fareeha tried to decipher Angela's sparse words to no avail. "What's wrong? You can tell me." She got closer to put a reassuring hand on Angela's arm.*

*Angela leaned into the touch and seemed to find what she wanted to say. "Will our wedding have to wait until after the Talon situation is resolved? That is, if it ever gets resolved."*

*Fareeha had her eyebrows raised at the question but quickly responded. "I don't know what Talon's endgame is and I know that you are one of their targets but they are not going to stop up from living our lives." She grabbed both of Angela's hands in her own. "Talon or no Talon, nothing is going to stop up from getting married. I promise you that." She gave a gentle squeeze for emphasis.*

*Angela felt relieved. "Then I'll hold you to your word." She opened the door behind her and slowly started to back into the room, pulling Fareeha with her. "Stay with me?"*

*Fareeha gave an apologetic look. "I would love to but..." She loosened her hold on Angela's hands. "I need to write some letters. There are quite a few individuals I need to contact so I'll be up writing for a while."*

*Angela started to frown at Fareeha's response. Mid-frown, she suddenly smiled and had a sparkle in her eyes. "At least stay until I fall asleep?" She looked up at Fareeha, her face taking on a hopeful expression.*

*Fareeha was mulling over the information. She opened her mouth to speak a couple of times but didn't actually say anything. After it seemed like she wasn't going to speak at all, Fareeha bowed her head and relented. "I'll stay until you fall asleep."*

*Angela grinned at her victory and fully pulled Fareeha into the room, turning on the lights when*

*she shut the door. "You know how to make a woman happy." She walked over to the edge of the bed and sat down, patting the space next to her. "Come sit." When Fareeha took the spot next to her, Angela rested her head on a firm shoulder. "I'm going to get dressed." A sly smile started to form. She leaned in closer and whispered in Fareeha's ear, "You can peak if you want."*

*The intense blush on Fareeha's face said everything the woman could not. She looked down at her hands and busied herself by fiddling with her thumbs. Angela watched her for a minute and found that Fareeha did not look up even for a second. She smiled at the display and headed towards her wardrobe. Taking out a sleep outfit, she started to get undressed. Halfway through, she suddenly slowed down for just in case; it didn't take long for Angela to feel eyes trained on her back.*

*She smiled to herself and continued to take her time getting dressed. When she was finished, she twirled around and gave Fareeha a bright smile and a wink. She giggled when Fareeha looked shy all of a sudden. Getting in the bed, Angela settled under the covers and gestured for Fareeha to lie next to her, pulling the blankets down for extra emphasis. Fareeha got under the covers, laying on her side to face Angela.*

*"You know Fareeha, there's no need to be shy around me." Angela smirked. "Especially since we're getting married."*

*Fareeha lowered her gaze for a moment and then looked back into Angela's eyes. "You bring out these feelings in me. Sometimes I just can't help it." Her heart started pounding when Angela buried her face in her neck in response. She felt an arm wrap around her shoulder and suddenly she was on her back, Angela having already tangled their limbs together by the time she realized what happened. "And sometimes I find myself pleasantly surprised."*

*Angela lifted her head to give Fareeha a quick kiss and then lowered it down to rest on Fareeha's chest. "Thank you for staying with me." Not wanting to keep Fareeha too long, she focused on trying to sleep. The events of the day had worn her out more than she thought; she found herself dozing off fast. The last thing she remembered was a gentle touch moving through her hair and a quiet mutter of goodnight from Fareeha.*

Angela ran a hand through her hair. "At least she stayed for a bit." She slid out from beneath the covers and headed over to get dressed. As soon as Angela finished tying her shoes, she heard a knock at the door. She crossed the room and opened the door to find Hana standing on the other side.

The girl had a look of determination on her face. Her posture was rigid, her hands held behind her back. She had her feet planted shoulder width apart, an air of seriousness surrounding her. "Good morning Angela. I hope I'm not bothering you." She loosened her stance when Angela smiled and shook her head no.

"It's no trouble. I was just about to leave anyway." She opened the door wider. "Is there something you needed to speak with me about?"

"Can I come in?" She took Angela's gesture of stepping back a little as the go ahead to walk inside. When she heard the door close behind her, she turned around to face Angela. "Last night was a lot to take in."

"Hana if you're worried about me--"

Hana cut her off. "Of course I'm worried about you!" Her brows creased in concern. "I thought you were just here on vacation and to meet mama but that wasn't everything."

Angela bit her lip, a look of guilt showing on her face.

“But here’s the thing. You’re family now. There’s people out there that want you gone.” Hana crossed her arms under her chest. “I’m going to make sure nothing happens to you.”

Angela blinked a couple of times. *I really thought I was getting a scolding here.* “So you’re saying that you are going to be my bodyguard?”

Hana nodded her head yes. “I’ll make sure no one so much as touches you.” She uncrossed her arms. “Mama has muscles but I have some too.” She flexed her right arm. “See look!”

Angela smiled endearingly at the display. “You look very strong.” She chuckled when the girl beamed at her. She closed the gap between them and gave Hana a hug. “Thank you. I’m sure you’ll protect me well.” She pulled away and gave the girl a quick kiss on her cheek, trying not to giggle when she saw Hana’s face coloring up.

“N-no problem.” Hana put her arm down and cleared her throat. “I’m actually going to join the defense force next year. Mama said I could when I turned eighteen.”

“So you’re going to be a soldier too?”

“I love this city and what it has given me.” She focused her gaze towards the window, watching a few guards roam about. “I want nothing more than to help keep it safe.” She focused on Angela again. “For now, I’ll keep you safe.”

Angela chewed her lip at the prospect at what could happen to Hana. She’d seen too many dead soldiers in her time as a field medic. At times, she could clearly picture lifeless eyes staring back at her. But then she thought about Ana and the others. How they’d jump in head first to keep regions from burning, saving countless lives in their mission to protect. She remembered seeing Ana perched high, spending countless hours watching the perimeter. Her hawk like eyes searching for any potential threats as she and her soldiers kept the temporary triage area safe.

Angela sighed and gave a small smile to the girl. The life of a soldier was dangerous but she’d seen what someone with the will and want to protect can do. “You’ll be a good soldier.”

Hana seemed happy at Angela’s response. “That’s what mama says too.” A low drawn out growl filled the room and Hana clutched her stomach in embarrassment. “I think breakfast sounds good now.”

“Let’s go eat then. Since you’re my new bodyguard, you can lead the way.” She gestured towards the door and grinned when Hana scrambled to open it. “Also, I wanted to go to the shops to get some things, you should come with me.”

Hana seemed excited at the prospect. “Yeah! Let’s eat and then I can drive us wherever you need to go.”

-

It was mid-afternoon and Fareeha was wearing thin. Since early morning she was in meeting after meeting. Every now and then she’d think about last night and how right it felt to have Angela in her arms. The thought of losing her spurred her on to work tirelessly. She wrote letters into the early hours and made sure that everyone she was currently speaking with would have enough time to make her emergency meeting.

For the past couple of hours, she was speaking with her military advisors. They were discussing where to send the surveillance squads and how many. One plan was to send them to where new

leaders have risen, to observe their change in military tactics. The other was to send them into potentially vulnerable cities, to start an investigation on Talon's tactics. Fareeha took in all the information and finally spoke up.

"While I think it is important to defend vulnerable city leaders, I think it is also important to discover what these new military exercises are about." Fareeha pointed to the map that covered the table in front of them. "My recommendation is to send out a squad to each city with a new leader and to send out agents to high risk individuals." She started placing markers on the map. "We need to start tracking these letters, to find out where they are coming from. I want an investigation unit formed. We need to find out as much about Talon as we can."

One advisor spoke up before she could continue speaking. "If I may, we don't know what kind of threat this Talon poses. We don't even know if it's them that's doing all of this. We can't afford to send off that many soldiers without putting our city at risk."

Fareeha had anticipated this. "This will be a joint military investigation."

Another advisor spoke up as well. "And which city is going to help with the investigation?"

"Germany."

-

It was a couple of hours since Angela and Hana were shopping. Angela didn't need to actually get anything but after what Hana said that morning, Angela came up with the excuse so that they could spend some time together. So far it was going well.

They were taking a break by some food stalls. Hana was munching on bread that she periodically dipped in a sauce. She'd switch off between eating that and little bites of stuffed cabbage. Angela was trying her best to finish the giant sandwich she ordered.

"So Angela, I noticed that you have quite a weird list going on." She pointed to the bags that were near their feet. "First you bought a lot of sweets, then you looked at a bunch of pocket watches and bought two of them, you've got five scarves in that bag, that other bag has a whole village of antique figurines, and to top it all off we just got back from getting even more sweets." She finished off the last of her bread. "I'm starting to think that you don't even have a list."

Angela rubbed the back of her head in guilt. "I actually just wanted to spend time with you. All of these things just caught my eye." She looked at her shopping bags. "Especially those cute little figurines. I couldn't help myself with those."

Hana looked overjoyed. "If you wanted to hang out, all you had to do was say so." She quickly shoved the rest of the stuffed cabbage in her mouth. "I can show you my favorite shop if you want," she said through a half full mouth.

"And what store might that be?"

Hana smirked. "It's called Omar's Game Shop. There is a self-proclaimed game wizard, and you guessed it his name is Omar, that sits around all day beating everyone at any game. And that's where I come in." Hana pointed both thumbs at her face. "I like to teach him a little humility every now and again by wiping the floor with him." She put her hands down. "Of course I never challenge him in chess. I'm not stupid."

Angela nearly choked on her sandwich as she fought the urge to laugh. Swallowing that last painful bite, Angela was free from her sandwich obligations. "That sounds like fun. I'd love to see this."

Hana stood up from the bench they were sitting on and grabbed some of Angela's bags. "Then follow me!" She waited for Angela to get up before leading the way.

On the way there, Angela could have sworn she saw Ana and Lena wandering around the shops but when she looked back, they were not there. *They were just here.* Scratching her head, Angela caught up to Hana; she'd ask them about it later.

They walked for a few more minutes, Angela mentally cataloging some shops she would like to backtrack to. Eventually, Hana stopped in front of a sleek looking shop. It had a bright blue sign that read 'Omar's Game Shop'. The door was left open and an 'open' sign hung from doorway.

Hana started to walk in, Angela following after her. There were floor to wall shelves that held different kinds of games. Some held nothing but card games, others had board games and dice games. Angela spotted a few strategy games that peaked her interest. Hana grabbed a pack of cards and headed towards the back of the store.

At the back was a man with long hair and a beard. His darker skin showed signs of sun exposure, the beach gear on the wall behind him giving away that he enjoyed his time in the sun. He was sitting at a table with a strategy game set up. His opponent, a boy in his teens, was concentrating on where to place his pieces next.

Hana leaned towards Angela and whispered in her ear. "The game's almost over. Two more moves and Omar wins." She pointed to different locations on the board. "He's got control of the sea, those hilltops, and the cliff side. There's no way the other guy is gonna survive the next wave."

Angela genuinely tried to understand what Hana was saying. It helped that the boy had fewer pieces on the board than this Omar did. Two moves later, Omar landed a crushing victory just like Hana said. The boy frowned and reluctantly pulled out some money and handed it to Omar. He got up from his seat and started collecting all the pieces, putting them in the game box and leaving.

Hana whispered to Angela again. "If you can beat Omar, you get to keep the game free of charge." She held up the cards she was holding onto. "I'm about to win some new cards."

Angela watched Hana approach the table. Omar looked towards the girl before sighing. "What game is it this time?"

"Nice to see you too Omar." She dropped the pack of cards on the table. "Just wanted a new card game." She took the seat the boy was sitting in and gestured towards Angela. "This is Angela. I wanted to show her the place and have her take witness of your epic defeat."

Omar studied her for a moment. "Didn't I see you at the festival?" He looked for a bit longer and finally pinned it down. "Yeah! You were on the float with our protector." He leaned back in his chair with a smile. "Rumor has it you two are engaged."

Angela was surprised. "B-but how did you know that?"

Omar started laughing. "So it is true!" He wiped away a stray tear. "You can't be announced as the 'Lovebirds' without people talking about it. Some people say that you two were already married, having had eloped in some other city."

Angela blushed at the new information. "Well, once Ana gets everything ready, I'm sure everyone will know for sure soon."

He grinned at Angela's response. "That woman was always big on celebrations." He turned his

attention back to Hana. "If you came to watch me get schooled, you're in for a treat. I've never won a game against this girl." He narrowed his eyes in suspicion. "Although, you've never challenged me in chess. Something you want to admit Hana?"

Hana avoided eye contact with the man and started dealing out some cards. "Have you ever beaten nana at chess yet?"

He seemed wounded at the remark. "That hurts you know." He eyed the really nice chess sets he had on display. "You Amari's have a lot of expensive chess sets Ana won from me." He clutched at his chest in a display of pain. "Did I mention those were expensive?"

"See Omar? I'm just saving you the hassle of losing another nice chess set. I've learned from the best."

Omar held his hands up in surrender. "You got me there o great game champion. Let us get on with this so I can go eat my meal in shame." He picked up his dealt cards and took a more serious face.

Angela watched as Omar's face slowly morphed into a grimace as the game drew on. Every play Hana made seemed to crush his spirit and wound his pride. After ten minutes he sighed in defeat as Hana play her finishing hand.

Hana started putting the cards away as Omar slumped back into his chair. "What a shocker there Omar. Looks like I win again." She grinned when he waved her off.

"Yeah, yeah I get it. Enjoy the new cards Hana." He stood up from his seat and headed towards the back door. "It was nice meeting you Angela. My mother is going to freak out when I tell her the gossip is true." He waved to Hana. "Be seeing you around." Opening the door he left.

Angela stared at the back door for a bit. She was confused. "Did he just leave his own shop?" She looked over to Hana and pointed at the back door. "You did see that right?"

Hana grinned at Angela's confusion. "If I wasn't me, I'd be confused too." She reached into her pocket and pulled out a key. "He gave a key a year ago. I'd always play into his lunch break or past dinner so he just gave me a key one day so he could run out quickly without worrying over locking the shop." She gestured her chin to the back door. "The back door locks itself."

"He must trust you a lot."

Hana shrugged her shoulders and lead them to the front of the store. "I'm a trusting kind of person." When they were outside, she started on locking the shop. It was a complicated looking system that had one central lock to cement it all together. Hana put finished setting up the odd locking system before turning the key in and pulling it out. "We can go now."

"There were some shops I saw on the way here." Angela tapped her chin in concentration. "I think they were this way..." She led them back the way they came.

-

Lena had been walking and driving with Ana since morning. They were doing some important Talon recon...or so she thought. For the past hour, they were at a bakery sampling different kinds of cakes. Not that Lena was complaining but still... Ana *did* say they were doing recon.

"Say Ana, not that I'm complaining about the cake, but what does this have to do with Talon?" She took a spoonful of the slice in front of her.

“It doesn’t.” Ana picked up a new slice and started eating.

Lena tilted her head in confusion.

“I’m picking the cake for Angela and Fareeha’s engagement ceremony.” She nodded her head in approval over the last slice she ate. “Which one did you like the best? I’m more partial to the hazelnut one.”

“Well now this make sense now and if you’re askin’ me, the hazelnut one was my favorite too.”

Ana nodded in agreement and got up from her seat. She leaned over the counter and talked to the baker. She nodded her head vigorously and wrote down all Ana said. When Ana was done, Lena could hear the baker tell her, “Thank you and congratulations!” The woman quickly folded a box and filled it with pastries. “This is a thank you.” Ana took the pastries and thanked the woman before heading back to the table.

“Hana’s going to be happy, these are her favorite.” She sat back down and went back to eating her unfinished slices of cake. “Since you mentioned Talon, I did get some information that the protectors in Ghana, Cyprus, and Romania have received the letters.”

“When did you learn that?” Lena took another bit of cake. “Was it at the jewelry store?”

“No, I got a custom necklace for Angela there.”

“The bookstore?”

“I was running low on my nightly reading material.”

“What about that shady gambling den?”

“I won a bet.”

Lena was at a loss for words. “Then when?”

Ana finished her cake pieces. “Remember when we stopped for lunch?”

Lena racked her brain for the memory. “Don’t tell me it was that food stand guy.”

Ana nodded her head in response.

“Y’know, back home you were always sneaky but this is some next level stealth you got going on.”

Ana seemed to get an idea. “Say Lena, you said that there’s a Talon back home, do you happened to know any of the members? And for that matter, who were the other members of this Overwatch you’ve mentioned?”

Lena seemed pleased to be of help. “Well right now, there’s three big baddies at Talon we know about for sure. There’s this edgy looking guy that goes by Reaper. We found out that he was Gabriel Reyes. Unfortunately he was one of the founding members of Overwatch. Then there’s this woman who goes by Widowmaker. She’s a sniper too. He name is Amelié Lacroix. They say she doesn’t feel anything.” Lena finished her cake as well. “The last one just goes by Sombra. We don’t know who she is, only that she has known ties to Talon and is wanted basically everywhere. She’s a high profile thief.”

Ana took a mental note of all the information. “And Overwatch?”

“Besides us, Fareeha, Angela, and Hana there’s...” Lena started to tap her chin. “Winston. He’s a talking gorilla. You guys don’t happen to have those would ya?”

Ana shook her head no.

“Anyway, Jack Morrison was a founding member although he goes by Soldier: 76 now. Pretty much does his own thing now. There’s Torbjörn Lindholm, Reinhardt Wilhelm, and Mei-Ling Zhou. We just recruited Tekhartha Zenyatta and Lúcio Correia dos Santos.” She tapped her chin a couple more times. “Oh how could I almost forget! There’s Genji Shimada. He came back a while ago. He’s got a brother, Hanzo, but he’s not Overwatch. And then there’s Jesse McCree. The resident cowboy gunslinger. He’s pretty funny.”

Ana was surprised that she knew most of those names. She almost winced at the last three. They brought up memories she’s rather not dwell on. But hearing that name again. *I taught that boy how to shoot but...*

*It was a raining night where Ana was on watch duty. She had a coat closed tight against her, settling under the branches of the tall tree that overlooked the house she was perched on. In the distance she could see a figure slowly making their way to camp. Slinging her rifle on her back, Ana pulled out a pistol and jumped down from the roof with ease. She doubled back to where she last saw the figure and followed the footsteps forward.*

*Having caught up behind the figure, she could see that it was a young man. Holding the pistol towards him, she called out to the mystery figure. “Who are you? What are you doing here? Think about what you say next, I’ll know if you’re lying.”*

*The young man turned around slowly, his hands raised in the air. His mop of hair was drenched in the rain, the hat he wore doing nothing to stop the rain from soaking through. Brown eyes glinted in the moonlight, his clean-shaven face making him look younger. He looked as old as Angela. “I’m sorry ma’am but I have no idea what you’re tellin’ me. You don’t happen to speak English?”*

Ana switched languages. “Who are you? What are you doing here?” She kept the pistol steady. “I’d hurry up if I were you.”

*“The name’s Jesse McCree. I’m from the States, been running from some nasty people. Long story short, I found myself here and well I thought I’d help.” He gestured to the pistol with his chin. “I can shoot a gun.”*

Ana contemplated Jesse’s words. She pointed the pistol towards the ground and handed the gun over. “Show me then.” She pointed over to a busted window. “I want you to hit the wall behind that window through the hole.” She loosened her grip on the gun when Jesse grabbed it. “It should be easy enough. And I wouldn’t try anything unless you want to meet the ground.”

*Jesse let out a puff of air into the rain and aimed for the hole in the window. Squeezing the trigger, he shot a round. It hit the intact part of the window pane before traveling further. He turned back towards Ana looking embarrassed. “That was just a fluke.”*

Ana took the gun back and put it in the holster on her side. “Looks like you need some practice boy.” She looked into his eyes some more. The sincere expression he held calming her guard. “You said you’re on the run from some bad people?” He nodded. “I’m in the business of helping those in need.” She wrapped her arm around his neck and started heading towards the camp. “Stay with me and I’ll teach you how to properly shoot.

“That’s a mighty fine offer I’d be a fool to deny.” He let himself be led through the rain, Ana

*never letting go as she dragged him to camp.*

Ana's mind surged forward to the other rainy day; she shook the memory away before it could replay in her mind. She focused her gaze to a worried looking Lena.

"Are you alright there love? You spaced out for a moment there."

"I'm fine. I just recognized some of the names you mentioned." She smiled at Lena. "You mentioned Reinhardt. He's actually the protector of Germany. He's a good friend of mine. We fought in the war together."

Lena nodded in understanding. "Any of the others?" Ana just nodded in reply. Lena took that as a sign to not prod any further.

"I look into the names you've given me. Actually, if you could write them down, that would be helpful." She stood up from her seat. "We should go, I still have some things I need to get done."

Lena stood up as well. "More things for the ceremony?"

"Of course."

-

When Angela and Hana got back, the sun was already setting. They spent the rest of the day shopping for clothes, getting matching necklaces, and staying still for a painting Angela commissioned a street artist for. Hana was walking next to her, her hand in one of the bags of sweets picking out her favorites.

They got back inside and Hana helped Angela carry the bags to her room. They just put it all on the bed, Angela reassuring the girl that she would deal with it later. "Actually Hana, if you could help me find Fareeha, that would be helpful."

Hana nodded and joined Angela in the search. They went to her room first and found nothing. They checked Ana's room and still nothing. Come to think of it, even Lena was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is everyone?" asked Angela. *Maybe they went out too.*

Hana mulled over her thoughts. "Since it's safe here, I think we should split up to find mama. She should be back by now. She left extra early too." Hana nodded at her own course of action. "I'll see you Angela."

Angela watched Hana disappear at the end of the hallway. She turned in the opposite direction and started her search there. By the time she met up with Hana again, they both confirmed nothing. "Don't worry about it Hana. She'll show up eventually. I just wanted to see her."

Hana suddenly looked very tired. "Alright then. I'll just head to bed for a nap. Today was fun but I'm tired." She waved goodbye to Angela and started to her room.

Angela sighed to herself and headed towards the stairs. She wanted to at least enjoy the night breeze for a while. Taking a seat in the balcony, Angela pouted to herself. *I didn't get to see her this morning and now I can't even find her. Hana said she should have been back by now. She closed her eyes and felt the cool wind coming from the river. I shouldn't be this clingy anyway. Space is good. Makes the heart grow fonder they say.*

She peaked an eye open and quickly opened the other one when she saw a figure running

alongside the river. It slowed down to a jogging pace before walking towards the gardens. When it got closer, Angela could clearly see that it was the woman she was searching for. She excitedly got up from her seat and ran the rest of the way to the gardens. If she was as nimble as Hana and Fareeha, she would've climbed down from the balcony.

When she reached the gardens, she could see that Fareeha was sitting underneath a tree. She had her eyes closed, her breathing calming down from the run. "I was looking for you." Angela stood in front of Fareeha with her hands at her hips. "I didn't see you at breakfast. Hana said you left early."

Fareeha smiled at Angela's voice before opening her eyes. "I had a lot of meetings to get through." She shifted forward a little. "When I got back, no one was home so I decided to go for a run." She felt Angela take a seat beside her. "I didn't know when you'd be back." She turned her head to look at Angela, a smile still on her face.

"You make a fair point." She patted her lap. "Come lay down here."

Fareeha gave a look of protest. "I'm all sweaty."

Angela waved it off. "That doesn't matter. I just want you close." She patted her lap again. When she felt the weight of Fareeha's head resting against her thighs, she began to run her fingers through her hair. "I spent the day with Hana. It was fun. She even showed me her game skills."

Fareeha had closed her eyes again at the soothing touch. "I bet Omar didn't last long against her."

"Nope. He told me something interesting though. Apparently half the city thinks we are either engaged or already married."

Fareeha yawned. "I figured it was something like that. I've been getting looks. I mean, the first part's not wrong and soon the second part won't be either." She yawned again and didn't speak after that.

Angela's heart raced when Fareeha said 'soon.' Before long, Angela found that Fareeha had fallen asleep in her lap. She continued to stroke her hair, the sensation having a calming effect on her racing heart. The doctor found that she liked these moments and she wasn't in any hurry to wake up the sleeping woman.

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Amélie and Hanzo were at an undisclosed Talon base passing the time. They were playing a card game, a plate of macaroons between them. Hanzo hadn't touched the sweets which was well and good since Amélie brought them out for herself.

For the past few games, Hanzo was on a winning streak. Amélie didn't seem to care. The plate of macaroons more than enough to distract herself from the string of losses.

Hanzo had periodically eyed the macaroons every now and then. The sweets reminding him of the past. "My brother would eat a plate of sweets by himself." His stoic expression turned into a frown. "He liked to play games too." He looked down at his cards. "Maybe a bit too much."

Amélie noticed the change in expression. She quickly laid down her hand, a winning set of cards ending her losing streak. She took one last macaroon with her and stood up to leave. "We leave for the main base in the morning." Walking away, she didn't bother to turn around. "You're driving."

Hanzo didn't watch her go. Instead he focused on the plate before him. She left one macaroon

behind.

## Chapter End Notes

It's getting to the part where things will unravel as to what exactly happened during the war. I also can't seem to stop writing fluff so there's that too.

# Engagement

## Chapter Summary

A time to celebrate.

## Chapter Notes

Just gonna slide this in here.

Three weeks had passed. Hana woke up that morning excited. She was a little sore from all the extra training Lena was putting her through but that wasn't enough to deter her from getting up early that morning.

Her room was clean for once, the usual routine of navigating through piles of who-knows-what taken out from her schedule. Stretching a bit, she hopped out of bed and headed straight for her wardrobe, the extra special dress she picked out for this day waiting inside.

After quickly putting on her shoes, Hana left her hair alone and headed out. On her way to Fareeha's room, she whistled a quiet tune.

Hana saw the lights flowing out from under Fareeha's door. She knocked as she entered. "Good morning mama." She paused in the doorway when she saw that her mother was lying on the bed fully dressed for the ceremony, a faraway look on her face.

"Mama?" Hana walked to the edge of the bed. "You okay?"

Fareeha blinked a few times, an enormous smile overtaking her face when she shifted her head to look at Hana. "Never better." She raised a hand in the air, watching as her fingers moved in the air, her features reverting back to the blank stare she had earlier.

"Then what are you doing?" She sat down on the edge and lowered onto her elbows, her feet still hanging off the edge. "You're acting weird."

Fareeha stopped the movement of her fingers, another smile emerging from her lips. "I'm feeling two things at once." She brought her hand down and rolled over to face Hana. "I'm stuck between feeling immensely happy and disbelief." She started gently tapping the sheets. "Part of me feels like this isn't real. Like I'll blink and realize it was just some sort of fantasy. The other part of me that knows it is real is overjoyed to the point where my face is hurting from smiling so much."

"So you've been switching between the two."

"Yes." She reached out and tucked a strand of hair behind Hana's ear. "Nana said she was going to do your hair right?" Hana nodded. "Then I won't keep you long. Mother likes to take her time." She got up from the bed and straightened out the suit she was wearing, adjusting some of the pins that were crooked. She walked over to her desk and opened the top drawer. Digging around the back of the drawer, she pulled out a small velvet bag. "Catch."

Hana quickly sat up and managed to catch the bag before it hit the bed. “Those are the rings. Keep them safe for me.”

Hana nodded, taking a peak in the bag to look at the rings again as she slid off the bed. “Don’t worry, I’ll keep them safe for the official proposal.” She tied the bag to the belt around her waist. “And mama, you should go see Angela. You won’t have to worry about this being real after that.”

Fareeha was left standing by her desk smiling at Hana’s suggestion.

-

Angela was lounging around in bed that morning. Last night, Ana had told her to sleep in and enjoy her morning. Ana said that everyone else would be up early but for Angela to rest up because the rest of the day was going to be long.

And so there she was, the sheets twisted around her every which way while she lightly snoozed the morning away. At one point she got bored and sneaked out to brush her teeth but when she got back, her morning mainly consisted of rolling around in bed with nothing to do.

When she heard a knock on the door, she nearly rolled off the bed in excitement. “Come in!” she called from the tangle of sheets surrounding her body.

Whoever it was that knocked had closed the door behind them, a dip in the bed alerting Angela how close they were to her. “It looks like you’re having fun.” Angela’s heart starting pounding at the familiar voice. “Mind if I join in on the good time you’re having?”

Angela struggling against the sheets, sighing in relief when Fareeha helped free her head. “Fareeha, I thought you’d be busy. Ana made it sound like I wouldn’t see you until we got to Cairo.” She freed an arm. “Not that you being here right now is a bad thing. Quite the opposite really.” Angela finally straightened out the sheet, her full attention now on Fareeha. “Oh Fareeha...”

Angela pulled the sheet off and sat up. She ran her hand along the jacket of Fareeha’s uniform. “You look so nice.” She ran her eyes over the medals and pins displayed. “Egypt has such a distinguished protector.”

Fareeha’s face was turned to the side, her blush hidden behind her hair. “I thought that you’d like it if I wore my uniform.” Her blush deepened when she saw Angela biting her lip, nodding along as she continued to trace patterns on the material.

“I do. I love it.” She gave an exaggerated sigh. “Although...”

Fareeha stopped Angela’s hand with her own and gave the inside of her palm a light kiss. “What’s wrong?”

Angela giggled at the contact. She shifted over so that she was facing the other woman, her hand trailing along the buttons of her jacket. “You should get comfortable.” Her fingers popped open a button. “We can take this off yeah? Don’t want it to get wrinkled.”

Fareeha got to work unbuttoning the rest and shrugged out of her jacket, her pristine white dress shirt and tie now on display. Angela took the jacket and quickly crossed the room to drape it over a chair. When she returned to the bed, she gently coaxed Fareeha to lie down. The doctor rested her head on a firm shoulder and sighed into the closeness.

“When do you have to leave with Ana?”

“Half an hour.”

“And you took care of everything you needed to do here?”

“Yes.”

“Then for the next half hour, we’re going to get extremely comfortable.”

“Yeah?”

“MmHm.” Angela pushed herself up and straddled Fareeha’s hips, careful not to intentionally wrinkle the shirt. She traced over the tie. “Can I loosen this?” A nod. She eased the knot until the tie was considerably loosened. Her fingers tapped on some of the buttons of Fareeha’s dress shirt. “And these?” Another nod. Blue eyes stared into brown as she undid button after button stopping when a tan collarbone was on display.

Angela dipped down and placed the lightest kiss on Fareeha’s jaw. “So beautiful.”

Fareeha closed her eyes at the feel of Angela’s lips, her breath hitched when she felt those lips travel along her neck. “Angela.” She pulled the blonde closer. “I don’t know if I can stand to leave after just half an hour.”

Angela smiled into warm skin. “I’m sure you’ll find a way.”

-

Hana started to fidget in her chair. For the past forty-five minutes, Ana was painstakingly working on her hair. For the most part, Hana sat perfectly still, letting idle chatter pass the time. It was when she realized she’d been sitting in that same chair for nearly an hour did her leg start to bob up and down.

“I’m almost done little rabbit.”

Hana tried to reign in her extra movement. “Okay nana.” She peered into the mirror and smiled. Ana was putting in the finishing touches, the golden beads going in her hair one piece at a time. “Just to make sure, you’re leaving with mama and I’m driving Angela and Lena to Cairo two hours after that.”

Ana put in the last hair ornament, patting Hana’s shoulder to indicate she was done. “Yes, but I do think you should check on Lena before leaving. I have a sneaking suspicion that she’ll still be sleeping.”

Hana got up and dragged the chair closer to the mirror. She flipped it around so her arms rested on the back of the chair as she admired the work of her grandmother. “Yeah, I’ll check on her.” She ran her fingers through the beads. “She always shows up late to practice if I don’t drag her there.”

“I’d say the look on Fareeha’s face when you knocked her off her feet was worth the lateness from your new mentor.”

Hana couldn’t stop the devilish grin from appearing on her face if she tried. “That was a good day.” She stood and wrapped Ana in a hug. “Thank you nana.” She smiled when she felt the kiss on her head.

“It was my pleasure.” She gave the girl another pat on the back. “Could you go find Fareeha? I’m sure she’d love to see you before we leave. You can tell her I’ll be waiting in the car.” She started towards her desk but whipped back around. “She gave you the rings right?”

Hana put the chair back and gestured to the small velvet bag tied to her belt. "Yeah, they're right here." She headed over to the door, halfway out before smiling back at Ana. "I'll see you in Cairo nana."

Ana smiled back at the girl, having trouble holding back her excitement as well.

-

Fareeha was standing in front of Angela's mirror getting dressed again. She was trying to at least. She was in the middle of buttoning up her shirt when warm hands snaked their way back across her stomach.

"Sorry about wrinkling the shirt. I got carried away." Angela took a moment to trace the warm skin before withdrawing her hands. She rested her head against Fareeha's arm and watched with an amused look as Fareeha finally managed to button her shirt all the way.

Fareeha seemed to consider her words as she tucked in her shirt. "The jacket will hide the wrinkles." She started fixing her tie, smiling at their reflection as Angela began the fruitless endeavor of trying to smooth out the wrinkles.

Angela huffed when she saw it wasn't working. "At least I didn't wrinkle the jacket."

"Well, even though mother did say 'all of Egypt is going to be there', a wrinkled jacket wouldn't have ruined my day. The worst thing that would happen is people might look at me funny." Fareeha inspected her collar and noticed a red mark slightly peeking out. "Although, I have a feeling that's the least of my problems."

Angela giggled when she saw Fareeha inspecting her neck, the marks she left showing through when the collar was moved around. "I don't think the jacket will hide those."

"Well I-" The sound of knocking distracted Fareeha from finishing her sentence.

"It's open," called out Angela.

Hana wasted no time in opening the door, leaning on the doorframe once she spotted Fareeha. "It's time for you to go. Nana said she'd be waiting in the car."

Fareeha froze in her actions. Her arms stayed locked in place, Angela swearing up and down that she could have been mistaken for a statue.

Angela decided to make it easier for Fareeha and walked over to the chair her jacket was resting on. When she got back to Fareeha, she gently guided the other woman's arms into the sleeves, straightening out the tie before buttoning up the jacket. After smoothing out the non-existent wrinkles, she leaned up and placed a brief kiss on Fareeha's cheek. "I'll see you in Cairo okay?"

Fareeha nodded along and didn't resist when Angela escorted her out the door.

Once Fareeha was out of sight, Hana turned her attention back to Angela, her eyes narrowing in a knowing look. Angela had the decency to look embarrassed.

"H-hana." Angela felt her face getting hot under the younger girl's knowing gaze.

Hana shrugged her shoulders. "I'm not going to say anything. You know what you did. I just feel sorry for poor mama. Nana's gonna rip into her once she sees them."

Angela's jaw dropped in realization. "I wasn't thinking about that."

“I don’t think you were doing much thinking to begin with.” Hana laughed, Angela’s face morphing into an indignant expression. “Okay, okay. Since it’s a big day for you, I won’t say any more about the glaringly obvious hickeys you gave mama.”

“I don’t know if you’re being genuine or if that was another jab at me.”

Hana shrugged her shoulders, a sly smile forming on her lips. “Who knows? But, I’ll leave you to get ready, I’m gonna go check on Lena.” Pushing herself off the doorway, Hana turned towards the hallway and walked away leaving a stunned Angela to her thoughts.

Hana heard Angela’s door close and smiled to herself. The satisfaction of getting a rise out of Angela gave the girl an extra pep to her step. She started whistling to herself on the way to Lena’s room, the promise of the day’s events keeping her mood elevated.

Stopping in front of the familiar door, Hana knocked. She waited a bit and there was no answer. Raising her hand again, she knocked with more passion. Still no answer.

“Just like nana said.” Hana sighed as she reached for the door handle.

The first thing she noticed was the ‘not a clock’ glowing contraption by the window. She walked over to it and saw a flat, square object sitting next to it, a wire connecting them both. The urge to touch was strong but Hana managed to convince herself that touching things from another world wasn’t the best of ideas.

Ripping her eyes away from temptation, Hana focused her gaze on the stretched out form still sleeping on the bed. One of Lena’s feet was sticking out and the blanket was pulled down to her waist. Hana chuckled at the noticeable drool trailing down Lena’s chin.

“Hey Lena, you gotta get up.” Hana got closer and nudged the woman on the shoulder. “I have no problem leaving you behind. I’ll only be a little upset if you’re not there. You did promise to dance with me.”

Lena still showed no sign of waking. *How can she still be sleeping? She went to bed earlier than the rest of us.* She shook the sleeping woman one more time for good measure. “I’ll be back so enjoy it while you can.”

-

Lena was having a good dream. She was talking to Winston about the possibility of designing a new jet. They got to the part on whether or not the seats should be orange when it suddenly started to rain. Winston kept talking as if nothing was happening, Lena finding it hard to continue the conversation with the rain drops trailing down her face.

“Hey Winston? Maybe we should go inside.”

The gorilla seemed confused. “Is there something wrong?”

“Winston it’s raining.” She watched him look up into the sky, a confusing look overtaking his face when he focused back on Lena.

“I don’t see any rain.”

When Lena opened her eyes it took a moment to focus her vision. Blinking a couple of times, she felt droplets of water hit her face, the blurry image of something obscuring her view of the ceiling. She wiped her face and was finally able to see that Hana was hovering over her holding a cup of

water that was slightly tilted.

“And so she’s awake.” Lena could only watch as Hana dumped most of the water on her face. “Just to make sure.”

Lena bolted upright, the water still streaming down her face. Her mouth was open in silent shock, the cold liquid sending shivers down her spine.

“You’ve got an hour to get ready or else I’m leaving you here.” Hana crossed her arms, the cup still held tightly in her hand. “There’s breakfast on the table when you’re ready.”

Lena ran a hand through her wet hair. She kicked off the blanket and swung her legs over the side of the bed. Walking over to Hana, she took the cup and drank the rest of the water. “I’ll forgive you for the water trick. Just for today though.” She looked down to the pouch that hung from Hana’s belt and suddenly got excited. “Are those the rings? Can I see them?”

Hana uncrossed her arms and started backing up towards the door. “Yeah, when Angela’s wearing them.” She opened the door and stood at the threshold. “That is, if you manage to get in the car by the time we leave.”

Lena was stunned, watching as Hana walked out and closed the door behind her. Scratching her head, she blinked a couple of times, trying to process the events of the morning. She shook her head a little and patted her cheeks to snap out of it. “Well, best get ready then. I don’t want to find out if she was kidding about leaving me behind.”

Humming to herself, Lena opened her wardrobe and looked at the sparse amount of clothing she had. Fareeha had offered to buy her more clothes but Lena insisted that she wouldn’t be able to bring them back with her should she find a way to get back home. That didn’t stop Ana from dragging her to the shops to buy her some formal clothing. *“I’m not going to have you come to the engagement ceremony and the wedding looking like you just crossed the desert.”*

Lena smiled at the memory. *That’s just like something Ana would say.* Taking the less formal of the two outfits, Lena quickly got dressed. She slipped on her new shiny dress shoes and walked over to the window.

A quick peak at the energy levels showed that the accelerator was at full charge. She unplugged the solar panel connected to it and expertly folded it, stuffing it back in the small compartment of the accelerator.

Lena strapped on the accelerator in record speed, stopping by the mirror to check that everything was order. She laughed at the state of her hair. The strands were sticking out in every direction. *Ana would grab me by the ear and somehow pull out a comb from thin air if she saw me like this.*

She reached out for the comb on her desk. “Might as well save her the trouble.”

-

Hana was left in charge of making sure Angela and Lena ate breakfast. Her solution was simple. She gathered up a big bowl of figs and placed it in the middle of the table.

Currently Hana was tapping her fingers on the table, she already ate as much figs as she could and was waiting for someone to show up. In her boredom, she picked a smaller fig from the bowl and started throwing it in the air, catching it with quick reflexes.

The sound of a chair being moved caused her to lose focus for a second, the fig hitting her on the forehead. Hana rubbed the sore spot for a moment and frowned.

“That’s looks like it might have hurt.” Lena flipped the chair around so she could rest her arms on the back. “Is that breakfast?” she asked pointing to the bowl.

Hana just nodded, the unappealing idea of a red lump forming on her forehead taking her focus.

Lena managed to tip the bowl so a couple pieces of fruit came spilling out in her direction. She took the one closest to her and started eating. “Are you sure I can’t see them? I mean, you know what they look like. *Ana* knows what they look like. I’m feeling a bit left out here.”

Hana stopped her worrying and narrowed her eyes at Lena. “It’s still no.”

“You sure?”

“Yes.”

“So I can see them?”

“Still no.”

Lena pouted as she picked up another fig. She contemplated just blinking over to the pouch to take a quick peak but decided against it. “...fine.”

The room got quiet, Hana having gone back to inspecting her forehead and Lena eating her figs in silence.

“Why are you both so quiet?”

Lena nearly spit out her mouthful of fruit, quickly whipping her head around to find the source of Angela’s voice. “Wow.” She lifted the chair to turn it around, resting her head on her arms to look at Angela. “You look so beautiful Angela. I bet Fareeha’s gonna have a hard time keeping her eyes off you. *I’m having a hard time right now.*”

Angela blushed at Lena’s compliment. “Thank you.” She walked over to Hana, taking the hand that was busy investigating the skin, scanning over the girls’ forehead to see what was wrong. “I don’t know what you’re looking for but I don’t see anything.” She leaned down and gave a quick kiss to the area. “Whatever it was, I just kissed it better.”

Lena tried to contain her giggles as she watched Hana’s face turn impossible shades of red.

“I-I’ll be waiting in the car.” Hana quickly stood up and mad a mad dash for the front door. She looked back for a moment to regard Angela. “Breakfast’s in the bowl, and you look nice today.” She gave a quick wave and continued on her way.

Angela took Hana’s vacant seat and reached for the bowl. She saw the pile of figs and scrunched her brow. “Did she just put a bowl of figs on the table and call it breakfast?”

Lena reached into the bowl and grabbed another fig. “It sure looks like it.”

Angela grabbed a fig and stood back up. She nibbled on the fruit on her way to the kitchen, reappearing a bit later with something wrapped up in her hands.

Curious, Lena blinked over to Angela’s side trying to get a better look at what she was holding. “What’s that?”

Angela shrieked at the sudden appearance of Lena at her side. *I’ll never get used to that.* “They’re pastries, but since you scared me I don’t know if I want to share them with you anymore.”

“Oh come on! I’m sorry for scaring you.” She gave Angela her best puppy dog eyes, hoping to win the blonde over.

Angela narrowed her eyes, unwrapping the sweets all while keeping eye contact with the pleading woman in front of her. A scrutinizing minute passed, Angela finally making up her mind. “The peach ones are mine okay?”

“Yes, I totally understand.” Lena quickly scooped some pastries, excluding the peach ones, from Angela’s hands, immediately shoving one in her mouth in the sprint back to her seat. “These are so good. How come Hana didn’t just dump these in a bowl?”

Angela gave a sly smile. “These might have been in a hard to find location.”

Lena’s eyes widened. “You hid them!”

Angela shrugged her shoulders and started eating her peach pastry. “Doesn’t sound like something I’d do.”

-

“You know Angela, if I ever get back I’m going to have to tell the resident lovebirds all about you and Fareeha. Maybe it’ll give them a push in the right direction.

“Lovebirds?”

Lena paused as it just hit her she never told Angela or Fareeha about this. “Oh well you see, you two are a couple back home as well. Although, they’re not getting married like you guys. I just thought it would be a lot of fun to tease them about it.”

Angela froze. Her pulse started to pick up and for a moment, all thoughts had ceased, the sound of her heartbeat pounding in her ears she could hear. After Lena waved a hand in front of her face for the fifth time did Angela regain her senses. She blinked a few times and cleared her throat. “So how did they meet?”

Lena tapped her chin and tried to sift through her memory for the answer. “Well, they first me-“

“How close are they?”

“Well, I’d sa-“

“You called them the ‘Lovebirds’. Are they in love? Or did they dress up like Fareeha and I did?”

Lena was trying her best to keep up. “Yes, and...mayb-“

Angela placed her hands on Lena’s shoulders. “Never mind all that. I want you to write it down.”

“...what?”

Angela’s smile nearly blinded the poor woman. “Anything and everything you know about them, if you could write it down for me.” She raised a single finger in the air. “Think of it as a wedding present.”

Lena stood there blinking for a while, processing Angela’s request before absentmindedly nodding her head. She found herself wrapped in a hug, the choral accelerator the only thing separating the two. She raised her arms to reciprocate the hug, her eyes still wide from the sudden turn of events.

Angela quickly released Lena. “We should get going. Hana’s been waiting in the car for a bit now. Shouldn’t keep her waiting.” She looped an arm through one of Lena’s and started leading them to where Hana was.

As they walked to the car, Lena seemed to gain most of her senses. “So are you excited about today?”

Angela added a skip to her step, the action causing Lena to slightly stumble. “Before Ana basically dropped a surprise marriage proposal in my lap, I was convinced that I’d never get married. I didn’t want that sort of connection with someone. I was too busy trying to stay busy.” She skipped again, Lena stumbling once more at the action. “But then I met Fareeha and it was so easy to fall for her. Lena, she’s so sweet, she’s so caring and genuine. She’s dedicated and understanding. Fareeha has so much love in her heart for her city, for her family. It’s beautiful. *She’s beautiful.*”

Angela slowed her pace, finally noticing that Lena was struggling to keep in step with her. “Today, I’m more than excited.”

Lena smiled at Angela’s heartfelt enthusiasm. “So basically you’re telling me that you’re in love.”

Angela didn’t hesitate. “Yes, I am.”

The sight of Hana leaning against the car door came into view. Lena unhooked their arms and started running towards the girl. “Hey Hana, guess what?” She smiled more when the younger girl looked over at her. “Angela’s in love!”

Hana dropped the car keys at the outburst. She quickly bent down to pick them up, straightening up again a moment later. She wiped at her eye a bit, trying to hold back tears and smiling all the while. Hana started walking over to the two, wrapping Angela in a hug when she got close enough.

Angela rubbed Hana’s back, the wet tears dampening her shoulder. “I love you too Hana.” She felt the girl’s arms squeeze tighter around her waist, the tears pouring out more freely.

Lena was standing off to the side with a guilty expression on her face. “I didn’t mean to make her cry,” she whispered.

Angela continued to rub Hana’s back, patiently letting the girl use her shoulder to cry on. Eventually Hana lifted her head and released her hold on the doctor. She wiped away the tears from her eyes and cleared her throat. “W-we should get going.”

Hana stepped away and walked back to the car, Lena chasing after her. “Hey Hana! You should let me drive.”

Angela shook her head at Lena’s antics. She walked the rest of the way to the car and climbed in the passenger seat. She giggled at Lena’s failing attempts to get Hana to let her drive.

“I’ve been practicing Hana I swear! Ana’s been teaching me. She’s actually really good at driving even though she’s missing an eye.”

Hana started the engine and moved the car a bit forward, a grin forming on her lips as she watched Lena scramble to get in the car.

“Woah, woah. I’ll sit in the back, just stop the car.” Lena collided with the car when Hana stepped on the brakes.

“Best get in before I actually leave you behind.” While she waited for Lena to get in the car, Hana fixed her gaze on Angela. “I meant what I said before Angela, I’ll keep you safe if anyone tries anything on your big day.”

Lena’s head popped in between the two sitting up front. “Oh yeah Angela, this girl’s the real deal. She’s pretty much better than me.” She rubbed the back of her head. “Remember that day she knocked me out?”

“Yes,” said Angela. “You were out for three hours.”

Lena nodded enthusiastically. “I know!” She patted Hana on the shoulder. “That was really good.”

Hana started driving, the three of them falling into comfortable conversation.

-

When Fareeha and Ana arrived in Cairo, there were already crowds of people gathered in the plaza the engagement ceremony was going to take place.

“So when do I get to see the surprise?” Fareeha had parked the car, opening the door for her mother so they could walk inside together.

Ana smiled. “You’ll see when we get inside.” She took Fareeha’s offered hand, her eye zeroing in on Fareeha’s collar. She stood in front of her daughter, the nervous look on Fareeha’s face egging her on. She brought a finger up to Fareeha’s collar and pulled at it. “What’s this?”

Fareeha automatically brought up a hand to cover up the area, swatting away her mother’s hand to try and keep her from seeing any more. “It’s nothing mama.”

Ana’s heart did a double flip. *She said it again.* A wide grin was plastered on her face. “It doesn’t look like nothing. In fact...” She reached up to pull the collar down again. “Oh wow, there’s quite a few of them. What is Angela doing to my darling?” She snickered when Fareeha froze up in embarrassment.

Ana looped an arm through Fareeha’s and started leading them inside. “You two have been spending a lot of time together.” She let a bit a silence settle over them before continuing. “You’d tell your mother is Angela was corrupting you right? You’d tell me if she was *taking advantage* of you right?” She grinned when Fareeha seemed to choke on her own saliva.

“She’s no-”

“Ah, look at that! So quick to go to her defense.” Ana leaned closer to Fareeha. “I think you *like* her.”

Fareeha stopped feeling so embarrassed. “Of course I do.”

“I’m happy for you Fareeha. I’m overjoyed that she makes you happy.” Ana smirked. “Plus it’s a real ego boost to know that I was right about you two. I might open up a matchmaking business.” They reached the doors, Ana letting go of Fareeha’s arm to open the door for her. “Surprise.”

Fareeha was suddenly engulfed in a giant hug. Her feet were lifted off the floor and she felt herself being twirled around. When she was sufficiently dizzy, Fareeha was put back down to stand on her own. She put out arms in an attempt to balance herself, her head shooting up when she heard booming laughter.

“Reinhardt! You said you’d be here at the end of the month.”

“And miss the engagement ceremony? Ana wrote me a letter before you wrote me. She asked me to keep my coming a here a secret so it would be a surprise.” His booming voice echoed throughout the building. “But I have to say how surprised I was to find out that you and Angela were getting married! The last time I talked to her, she told me with the upmost confidence that she was probably never getting married. I’m so happy for you two.”

Fareeha was smiling from ear to ear. She reciprocated the hug, holding onto Reinhardt for a bit longer. “Thank you.”

Reinhardt looked around. “Where is everybody? I brought a gift for the little rabbit.”

“They’ll be here in a couple of hours. I wanted Angela to rest a bit more since it’s going to be a long day,” said Ana.

Reinhardt nodded in understanding. “Since we have some time,” he gathered both Ana and Fareeha in his arms, “I want to hear all about how this happened.” He led them to one of the many unoccupied tables and gestured for everyone to sit.

“Well Reinhardt, it was a nice afternoon by the river when suddenly Fareeha blurts out she wanted to get married.” She could see from the corner of her eye that Fareeha was looking down at the table in embarrassment. “Now, since I was visiting Angela every few months I got the idea that they’d be perfect for each other. Of course, I never said anything since the last time I talked to either of them about the prospect of marriage, it was still the same answer.”

Ana reached out to cover Fareeha’s hand. “But when my darling Fareeha told me the news, I saw my chance and I took it.”

Reinhardt was strangely quietly, signaling for Ana to continue.

“So when I got to Angela’s home, she was already sitting outside with tea waiting for me. We exchanged a few words but then we got to the real reason why I was visiting and well, for a moment she thought I was asking her to marry *me*. The poor woman was trying her best to let me down gently.”

Fareeha’s eyes widened in surprise. Reinhardt breaking the his silence with echoing laughter.

“When I made it clear that I was referring to Fareeha, she calmed down a bit but, I’m going to be honest with you, she wasn’t receptive to the idea. I tried to list off her best qualities and she politely agreed to ‘think about it.’ Of course I knew that probably meant no but I still had some hope.”

Ana took a moment to gather her thoughts. “Later, on that same day, I brought up the Talon issue with her. I was worried for her since she was in the same position as other victims. So after she showed me the letter they sent, we left.”

Reinhardt’s expression morphed into one of concern. “They went after Angela.” Memories of a younger doctor patching him up during the war flickered through his mind. His fists started shaking. “She doesn’t...”

Ana moved her hand to his arm, trying to calm Reinhardt. “I know.” She waited until he seemed more calm and continued. “When we were in the car, Angela surprised me. She told me that she actually thought about the proposal and said that she’d try if Fareeha was willing to try.” Her gaze flickered to Fareeha, a small smile on her daughter’s face.

“She told me the same thing,” said Fareeha.

“Now imagine my joy when they first met. They were pretty much smitten from day one.” Ana crossed her arms. “That was a real ego boost.”

Reinhardt seemed happy at that. “Is this true Fareeha?”

“I–“

“She couldn’t stop staring,” interrupted Ana. Fareeha’s cheeks were starting to turn pink. “But, I’ll have you know that Angela couldn’t peel her eyes off you either.” Fareeha’s blush deepened.

Reinhardt gave Fareeha a good hardy pat on the back. “No need to be so shy! This is good! Look where you two are now.”

Fareeha breathed out a laugh. She started smiling again, leaning her head on her hand. “I still can’t believe it sometimes.”

-

When they got to the plaza, Angela was amazed by the amount of people. For a moment, she entertained that *maybe* Ana really did invite all of Egypt. There were so many games stalls set up around the plaza, children already taking advantage of them.

“There’s so many people,” said Angela.

Hana spotted the other car and went to park next to it. “It’s not every day that your protector gets engaged. People are excited. They love mama.” She put the car in park and turned off the engine.

Lena’s head appeared between them again. “I hear you guys keep throwing around that word ‘protector’. What exactly does that mean here?”

Hana blinked a few times, her eyes widening in realization when she remembered that *of course* Lena wouldn’t know. “A protector oversees a city. They look after it and in most cases, they are charge of the panel that passes laws. It’s a role passed down the family. They say Egypt has had the longest line of protectors. Amari is a name everyone knows.”

Lena sank back in her seat. “I thought Fareeha was some high ranking military officer or something.” Lena took a moment to think. “This whole protector thing, doesn’t that leave room for people to take advantage of their role?”

Hana opened her door. “That’s another topic best reserved for when Angela isn’t getting engaged.” She stepped outside and walked over to open the door for Angela.

Lena scrambled out of the car after her. “Sorry if that was a touchy subject. I won’t ask about it anymore today.”

Angela stepped out of the car. “It’s alright Lena, just another time okay?”

Lena nodded, extended her arm for Angela to take. “I’ll walk you in then?”

Angela smiled and took Lena’s arm. “How thoughtful.”

Lena extended her arm out for Hana. “You too Hana.”

Hana took the offered arm as well. “Do you even know where to go?”

Lena started looking around. “No but...” Her eyes zoned in on a door. “I think it’s that door everyone’s so anxious to get into.”

“That’s the one. Lead on,” said Hana.

They got closer to the building, people recognizing Angela and Hana. They started cheering, the combination of their applause and excitement filling the whole plaza with noise, Angela could barely hear herself think.

When they arrived at the door, two guards opened the door for them, Hana thanking them as they walked inside.

Two steps in, Angela felt herself being lifted into the air. She was twirled around a bit, finally being put back down when she was starting to see double. It took a minute to focus her gaze but when she finally saw who it was, she nearly squealed in joy.

“Reinhardt!” She hugged the man and squeezed him as tightly as she could. “It’s been so long. What are you doing here? Fareeha said you’d be here at the end of the month.”

“Surprise! Ana wrote me and told me about your engagement. I wouldn’t miss the ceremony for the world.” His laughter rang through the giant room. “I’ll be there for the wedding too.”

“I’m glad.” Angela let go of her old friend and scanned the room. “Where’s Fareeha?”

Ana suddenly appeared out of seemingly nowhere. “Oh she’s around here somewhere.” She extended out her hand. “Join me in welcoming our guests?”

Angela took Ana’s hand and followed her back to the doors. Hana ran over and opened them for Ana and Angela. They took one step outside when Ana stopped. The two guards outside took the places beside them, blocking the entrance to the building. The crowd went silent when Ana lifted a hand.

“Welcome everyone. I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate your protector’s engagement.” She gestured towards Angela. “Please give Angela a warm welcome.” When Ana finished speaking, the two guards at the front door stepped to the side to let the people in.

Angela shook too many hands to count. Everyone that walked inside greeted her and gave her well wishes. Many children that passed by gave the doctor a hug instead of shaking her hand. Her face was starting to hurt from smiling so much, but Angela couldn’t stop because she was so happy.

When the line of people finally ended, Angela felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around to face Ana, the woman gesturing towards the middle of the room.

“There she is,” said Ana.

Angela followed where Ana was pointing to, immediately spotting Fareeha standing with her hands behind her back, everyone having cleared a circular space for her. Music started playing, Angela noticing the players on a balcony coming out from the third floor.

Angela started walking towards Fareeha, the other woman holding out her hand to her. The doctor felt giddy with excitement when she took the extended hand, immediately being pulled closer to the woman she loved.

“Have this first dance with me?”

Angela nodded, her heart beating too fast for her to say anything. They started off slow, Fareeha leading them across the dance floor. When the music picked up in pace, Fareeha lead them into the dance they spent many nights practicing.

Angela smiled to herself at the memory. Fareeha was so patient with her, sometimes taking several nights in a row just to get a single segment of the dance more fluid.

“You look so beautiful.” Fareeha spun her around. “I don’t think I could take my eyes off you.”

Angela encircled her arms around Fareeha’s waist, leaning in closer to whisper in her ear. “I don’t want you too.”

Fareeha grinned and dipped them down. “Then I won’t.”

When the music stopped, they both could barely hear the sound of applause surrounding them. Fareeha too busy admiring Angela’s bright eyes, Angela preoccupied with the feel of Fareeha’s pulse drumming at the touch of her fingers.

The music started back up again, the crowd surrounding them taking up more space to dance as well.

Hana made her way through the crowd, tapping Fareeha on the shoulder. “My turn?”

Fareeha nodded, Angela letting go of her so Hana could take her place.

Lena came barreling through the crowd, ending up at Angela’s side. “Don’t worry love, I won’t leave you hanging.”

While Lena and Angela danced, the doctor couldn’t help but peer over to Hana and Fareeha dancing. It looked so natural and effortless, liked they’d danced together often. The look of pure joy etched on their faces made Angela feel overwhelmed with happiness. She sighed and leaned into Lena’s shoulder, content to watch the pair dance a little longer.

“Something wrong?”

Angela shook her head. “No, everything’s perfect.” She nudged her head in the direction of Hana and Angela. “Just look at them. They’re so happy. And they dance so perfectly.” She squeezed Lena’s hand. “I love them and they’re my family now.”

“Well, sounds perfect to me.” She twirled Angela to the best of her ability. “What do you think of our dance?”

Angela giggled. “I think that you’re making a good effort.”

“Guess that means I’ll have to try a bit harder.”

-

True to her word, Hana stayed close to Angela after her dance with Fareeha to make sure nothing happened to her. They ended up dancing together, Fareeha joining in when they were finished. Lena joined in shortly thereafter, with Ana and Reinhardt finally getting on the dance floor to form a dancing circle with them all.

Hours passed with everyone dancing. By the time Reinhardt’s booming voice called for everyone’s attention, Angela and Lena were exhausted. They were a bit jealous of everyone else. It seemed like they were used to dancing for hours on end.

Ana's voice carried over the quieted crowd. "The food will be out shortly."

Hana took Angela and Fareeha's hands. She started leading them towards the table that was placed in the middle of all the other tables. "Over here, let's sit in the middle." She pulled out a chair for Angela and gestured for her to sit. She did the same for Fareeha, leaving a chair between them for herself.

Lena stole the seat next to Fareeha. "Would you look at that. She wanted to sit between you too."

Hana gave Lena a warning look. "Keep it up and I won't dance with you later."

Lena was stunned. "There's *more* dancing?"

"Yeah, of course. That's how these things work. There's dancing to start it off, then eating, then some games, and then more dancing." She waved her hand. "The ring ceremony is somewhere in between."

Ana took the seat next to Angela, Reinhardt taking the seat beside her. "Don't forget about the cake."

"Oh and cake."

"Doesn't cake just count as eating?" Lena looked confused.

Hana hummed to herself. "It's reserved for later in the night. Usually after the rings."

Angela seemed impressed. "You know a lot about these things."

Hana shrugged her shoulders. "Like I said before, I go to a lot of weddings."

"But this isn't a wedding," said Lena.

"Minor differences. Not much changes between the two."

Lena faced Ana. "No wonder you said it was going to be a long night."

Reinhardt's voice nearly started the whole table. "Isn't it great? I think it's all good fun."

Ana nodded along. "I wouldn't have it any other way." She pointed to the food being carted out. "Looks like the food's ready."

There were so many servers pushing food out to the mass number of tables. One headed straight for them, his cart filled to the brim. He expertly emptied all the contents of the cart onto the table, making sure that there was more than enough for everyone there.

Hana thanked the man. Everyone else following suit when they realized she had more manners than the rest of them combined. The server seemed flustered, hurriedly pushing the cart back to the kitchens in his escape.

During the dinner, Angela and Fareeha would try their best at feeding each other, finding creative ways to bypass Hana between them. Reinhardt would go off on one of his elaborate tales, Fareeha listening and hanging onto every word. Ana would grace the table with tales of a young Fareeha. Lena showed Hana how to expertly balance the empty dishes, an elaborate dish city being created between the two of them.

By the time everyone was finished eating, Angela and Fareeha each had an arm wrapped around

Hana's shoulders, the girl grinning from ear to ear at how close the three of them were.

Reinhardt pulled out small wrapped box and pushed it over to Hana. "Before I forget little rabbit, I brought a gift for you."

Hana eagerly reached out for the box, Angela's and Fareeha's arms falling behind her. The two quickly readjusted to holding hands on the back of her chair.

The girl wasted no time in unwrapping her gift, pumping her fist in the air when she saw the familiar rabbit shaped chocolates in the box. "I knew it!" She bumped the table in her excitement, the city of dishes threatening to topple over from the movement. "Oh, sorry."

Fareeha took one of the chocolates, biting off the chocolate rabbit head before Hana could protest. "You spoil her Reinhardt."

Reinhardt's laugh was an even bigger threat to the city of dishes. "And you don't do the same?"

Fareeha fed Angela the rest of the chocolate from behind Hana's chair. "It's my job to spoil her."

Lena tilted her head. "What about Ana? I thought it was in the grandma code or something to spoil the grandkids."

Hana pointed an accusatory finger at the older woman. "She won't even let me win at chess."

Ana was smiling into her drink. "At least you're getting better. I can't say the same for Angela."

Hana nodded in agreement. "Yeah that's true."

Fareeha looked over at Angela, the blonde burning red in embarrassment. She stood up from her chair and crossed over to Angela, offering her elbow for the doctor to take. "Join me outside? I promise no one will make fun of your chess skills."

Angela happily accepted. She held onto Fareeha's arm and the both of them started walking towards the doors.

Hana tried her best to quickly get out of her chair without knocking over the pile of dishes. "Hey wait up!" She turned behind her and motioned for Lena to follow. "Lena come on. There's a game I want to play."

Lena swiftly left her seat as well, knocking over one of the smaller plate towers. "Oops, sorry 'bout that." She clumsily stacked them together again, chasing after Hana to catch up.

Ana and Reinhardt were left sitting together at the mostly vacant table.

"I've been meaning to ask Ana, just who is this Lena?" He scratched at his chin. "She started talking to me earlier, she seemed very comfortable, like we've met before." He crossed his arms. "And then there's that strange contraption on her chest. I've never seen anything like it. She speaks a little funny too."

Ana started chuckling. "Oh Reinhardt. I don't think you'd believe me if I explained just exactly who Lena is. It's best she tell you herself."

-

The four had started a game of street ball with the kids running around the plaza. Hana opted for Lena to be on her team since the woman was insanely fast, even without using the accelerator.

Fareeha stayed with Angela, saying not to worry about Lena's speed since she had skill and technique on her side.

As the game progressed, Lena proved to be a formidable opponent. Her speed combined with the dirty tactic of having the smaller children dive between Fareeha's legs to capture the ball was working. Angela watched in amusement as Fareeha struggled to get her team coordinated enough to get the ball back. The blonde would occasionally kick the ball back in when it flew out of bounds, her dress preventing her from fully engaging in the game.

Hana on the other hand managed to tie up the ends of her dress, making it so she could play without being hindered. She joined in Lena's scheme by distracting the other team with some choice words. By the time the game ended, Fareeha's team only scored one point, Angela having been sneaky the last time the ball was out of bounds. Lena protested, saying that it was blatantly cheating to use an out of bounds ball to score but Hana gave them the point anyway.

Hana walked over to where Angela and Fareeha were standing. "So Angela, you regret not choosing my team yet?" She bent over slightly to let the ends of her dress flow down.

Angela pondered the question. "Hmm, it's hard to say." She wrapped her arms around Fareeha's neck, leaning up to kiss the woman. "I think..." She went in for another kiss. "My darling tried her best." She rested her head on Fareeha's shoulder. "It was quite the show. Isn't that right Fareeha?"

Fareeha nodded vigorously in agreement.

"So there you have it, no regrets from me."

Hana shrugged her shoulders. "Suit yourself then. Losing's not really my style." She turned on her heel, regrouping with Lena being overwhelmed by a group of kids to drag the woman to the game stall set up that had rabbit charms as prizes.

Angela buried her face in Fareeha's neck. "When does all of Egypt get to see us become official?"

"Well, since Hana has the rings, it's sort of up to her."

Angela laughed into warm skin, the puffs of air tickling Fareeha's neck. "I can't imagine how long that will take."

"The right question to ask is 'When will Hana want cake?' That's when we'll get to be official."

-

They were standing in front of the giant five tier cake after Hana utterly destroyed Lena in all the games they played. Hana's sweet tooth started to act up, and true to Fareeha's word, she rushed everyone back in to start the ring ceremony so she could get at the cake.

Fareeha caught the velvet pouch that was thrown her way, walking up to her mother standing off to the side.

Angela watched the two talk for a bit. She couldn't hear what they were saying, she only knew that it had to be something good since Fareeha's smile just kept getting bigger. They ended their conversation with Ana touching Fareeha's shoulder and nodding. When Fareeha finally turned to face her, Angela's heart nearly stopped at the sight of unshed tears threatening to fall over.

The whole room got quiet, Angela only able to hear Fareeha's steps as she got closer. Angela walked the rest of the way towards Fareeha, her heart not being able to take it if she had to watch

her love continue walking towards her with those emotion filled eyes.

Fareeha looked down between them, emptying the pouch into her palm. She looked back up again and tried to speak, clearing her throat when words wouldn't come.

"Angela, with the city as my witness, will you marry me?" It was short and simple but Angela could see the depth of emotion in those beautiful brown eyes.

A single tear slid down her cheek. "Yes." She closed her eyes when she felt a gentle touch reach up to wipe away the trailing wetness. She opened them when Fareeha held her left hand.

"I promise to protect you." She slid a gold ring with blue encrusted gemstones on her forefinger. "I promise to stay by your side." A similar diamond encrusted ring joined the blue on her finger. Fareeha took a deep breath. "And with all my heart, I want you to know that I love you." Angela couldn't hold back the tears anymore when Fareeha placed the plain gold band on her ring finger.

The crowd surrounding them erupted in applause when Angela brought her hands to Fareeha's face, drawing the taller woman in a deep kiss. When they parted, their foreheads rested against each other, the both of them smiling so freely at each other.

Angela wiped away the lingering tears from her eyes. "I love you too." Her smile got impossibly wider. "How could I not?" Angela shrieked when she was suddenly lifted by Fareeha, strong arms twirling her mid-air. Fareeha put her down after a couple of more spins, kissing the doctor with renewed passion.

In the distance, Angela could hear Reinhardt's booming voice exclaim his joy above the din of the crowd. She smiled into the kiss, loving every bit of the passion behind it.

They pulled away again, this time Hana running in between them to give Angela something to hold. "It's time to cut the cake."

Angela looked at the sheathed dagger held in her hands, the length of it the size of her forearm. Fareeha took off the sheath, placing it in her other hand. She put her hand over Angela's and guided them towards the cake.

Fareeha let go. "After you." She watched Angela cut into the cake with calculated precision, the dagger being set down on the table so she could grab the perfect sized piece with her hand. In the next moment, that very same piece was being smeared across her mouth, Angela licking the icing off her fingers while she giggled at Fareeha's shocked expression.

"It's good. Wouldn't you say so Fareeha?"

Fareeha licked some of the cake off her lips, admittedly enjoying the flavor. "It is." She leaned in and started peppering Angela's cheeks with cake filled kisses. "But as much as I enjoy the taste, I think it looks better on you."

She watched the blonde touch her face, eating the cake that her fingers managed to wipe off. "We'll have to see about that." Angela quickly cut another piece out, chasing after Fareeha when the other woman took off in a run.

The kitchen staff were quick to replace the couple, bringing out more cake and starting on cutting out pieces for everyone.

Everyone save Angela and Fareeha were seated at the same table enjoying their pieces of cake.

"I wish I could have taken pictures. That was emotional, and heartfelt, and cute, and those rings

are *so* beautiful.” She ended her sentence with a mouthful of cake.

“Take pictures?” asked Hana between bites.

“You know, a photograph.” Hana just gave her a confused look. “Oh wow, I thought since there were cars...” Her sentence trailed off, Lena never quite finishing her thought.

Reinhardt leaned over to Ana. “See what I mean?” he whispered.

Ana smacked him on the shoulder. “Behave. She’s a guest.”

Hana ran off to get more cake, returning with three more plates. She shoved one in Lena’s direction. “Here. We’re gonna go dance after this.”

Lena started on the new piece placed in front of her. “I thought lots of cake and dancing didn’t mix well.”

“Cross your fingers and hope you don’t puke.”

“Roger that.” Brown eyes scanned the crowd. She pointed with her spoon towards the other side of the room. “Look, your mum’s already dancing with Angela.” Lena squinted to get a better look. “Well, sort of.” She giggled at the sight.

Hana looked to where Lena pointed, shoveling the cake in faster at the sight. “Come on, hurry up.”

Across the room, Angela and Fareeha were half dancing and half wiping off cake from each other’s faces. The music wasn’t even playing but they found their own rhythm.

“Even though the cake suited you...” Fareeha wiped off a spot on Angela’s cheek. “It’s nice to see your face again.”

Angela smoothed away the cake on Fareeha’s chin. “I think I prefer looking at your face more than cake as well.” She leaned up and kissed the cleaned spot, giggling when Fareeha pressed closer to her, dramatically swaying them from side to side.

Fareeha started swaying them more gently. She closed her eyes and hummed a tune in time with their steps.

Angela rested her head on Fareeha’s shoulder, taking the time to listen to Fareeha’s hummed tune. “I love you.” She felt those familiar arms tighten around her waist.

Their dance was interrupted with a tap on Angela’s shoulder. “Dance with an old woman?”

Fareeha stopped humming, loosening her hold on Angela and stepping aside. Ana took her place, looking back at her daughter with a wink. “I think Reinhardt was looking for you Fareeha.”

Fareeha took the hint and left the two of them in search of the boisterous old man.

“You still have some cake.” Ana gestured to her earlobe.

Angela smiled as she reached for her ear, wiping away the stray cake. “Did I get it?”

“Yes, it’s gone.” Ana pulled out a pouch, stopping their dance to give it to Angela. “I got you something.”

Angela opened the pouch, pulling out a simple gold necklace. She trailed her fingers along the

chain, feeling a change in texture along the way. Angela brought the necklace closer, seeing the tiny engravings on the individual links. “What does it say?”

”To do no harm, our healing touch.”

Angela’s hand trembled, her fingers curling over the gift in a tight grip. “Ana I-I...” She tried to blink away the tears, her efforts made in vain. The words wouldn’t leave her throat. She hugged the older woman tight, her tears soaking into Ana’s dark blue shirt.

Ana rubbed at the crying woman’s back. “You’re part of our family now,” started Ana. “But your family is still a part of who you are.” She continued to rub Angela’s back, the blonde crying even more. “I’ll never forget them. I’ll never forget what they did.”

They stood there for a while, the crowd drowning out the sounds of Angela’s crying, Ana holding her close. The sound of music signaled the start of a new dance. Ana guided Angela over to an empty corner of the room.

“Ana.” Angela lifted her face and wiped at her red eyes. “Thank you.” She held the necklace out to Ana. “Could you put it on me?”

Ana wordless took the chain and opened the clasp. She gently put it around Angela’s neck, making sure not to catch her hair in it. “Beautiful as always.”

-

Night was deeply set in. Most of the cake was gone, the crowd of people thinning out as they started to leave. Angela was overlooking the moonlit plaza, her fingers running over the necklace around her neck. Fareeha was by her side, holding onto Angela’s other hand, a thumb running over her palm.

“I’ve been thinking Fareeha.” She kept her gaze on the plaza.

“Thinking about what?”

“That maybe my city should have a new election. I held onto my role as protector as a way to latch onto what was left of my family.” Her fingers stilled. “Since they died, I barely took two steps out of my city. I couldn’t bear to leave.”

Fareeha stayed quiet, squeezing Angela’s hand to continue.

“I buried myself in research, having my advisors doing the work *I* should have been doing.” Her fingers started moving the necklace again. “They deserve someone who doesn’t hide away.”

“Angela.”

“This is what I want Fareeha. I want Switzerland to have the protector they deserve, and I want to stay here with you. With our family.” She smiled at Fareeha. “I’m happy here with you. I don’t feel the need to hide anymore.”

“I think the best leaders question whether or not they’re doing the right thing. What you’re doing right now, it’s because you *are* a good leader. Your city was lucky to have you.”

Angela was blushing at Fareeha’s words. She looked away from her. “How do you always know what to say?”

“Would it be cheesy to say that it comes from the heart?”

Angela nudged her shoulder. “Yes, cheesy. But also beautiful.”

They shared a laugh, going back to gazing out over the balcony.

Angela saw a twinkle from the corner of her eye and checked the sky, patting at Fareeha’s arm to look at the sky. “Look! There’s a shooting star. Quick we have to make a wish.” Angela closed her eyes, presumably to make a wish. When she opened them again, she saw that Fareeha was looking right at her. “Did you make a wish?”

Fareeha blinked. “It was pretty.”

Angela pouted at that. “So you didn’t make a wish.” Fareeha shook her head no.

“I don’t need to wish for what I already have.” Fareeha pushed herself up to stand straight. “Let’s go home. You can tell me all about your wish in the car.”

Angela was still pouting but started heading back inside anyway. “You’re not supposed to tell people what you wished for.”

Fareeha chuckled at Angela’s response, following after the blonde inside.

-

As everyone walked down the steps to the plaza, Fareeha stayed behind Angela to talk to Reinhardt, Hana taking the opportunity to keep watch over Angela. They stopped at the last few steps, too engrossed in conversation to keep moving along.

“Hey Angela, did you see me dancing with Lena?”

Angela nodded along. “She certainly has a unique style.”

“Hey! I’m right here.”

“I meant that as a compliment Lena.”

Lena narrowed her eyes. “I find that hard to believe.” A impromptu starting contest started between them.

Hana backed up a little to get Fareeha’s attention. “Mama, I’m getting cold.”

Fareeha paused her conversation with Ana and Reinhardt. She started unbuttoning her jacket, taking it off and draping it over the girl’s shoulders. “Better?”

Hana nodded, walking back over to where Angela and Lena were still giving each other funny looks. She looked around the plaza, content to let the two continue their stare down. Something in the darkness caught her eye. On top of the building across from them, Hana could have sworn she saw someone standing there. She squinted her eyes to get a better look, eyelids opening wide when she saw a silver glint speeding towards Angela.

Acting first, Hana grabbed the doctor and yanked her down, looking behind her to try and warn the others. “Look out.”

Fareeha was barely able to turn her head when a slicing pain shot through her back, a silver dagger sticking out of the plant a little ways off to the side of her. Her back was searing in pain, the wound staining the back of her shirt with blood.

Angela was quickly on her feet, rushing to Fareeha as fast as she could. She widened the torn part of the shirt to get a look at the injury. It was deep, the blood flowing freely. "This is going to need stitches. We need to get to the hospital."

Lena was looking at Hana. The girl was darting her eyes between the building across from them and keeping her eyes on Fareeha. "Hana, did it come from over there?" She pointed to the building. The girl only nodded. "Alright, I'm going to check it out."

While Angela and Reinhardt were busy helping Fareeha into a car, Lena blinked towards the building, scaling it in a matter of seconds. She searched below for anyone suspicious, locking her eyes on a figure running in the distance.

She got back to the ground and gave chase, blinking when she could. The closer she got, the more she could see, finding out that she was chasing down a woman. The woman almost reached her car, Lena blinking into a tackle before she could reach the door handle.

They skidded along the street, Lena having landed on top of the other woman. She had her shoulders pinned with one arm, eyes going wide when she recognized the face. "Wi- Amélie?"

For a moment Amélie was stunned. She snapped out of it quickly. Using the woman's surprise to her advantage, Amélie flipped them. She pulled out a dagger and aimed right for the throat. Fast hands stopped her, she felt herself being kicked off, sliding against the street again.

Lena scrambled to her feet. "What are you doing here?"

"That's none of your concern." Amélie was already up, choosing to head for the car that was a few steps away.

Lena went charging after her, ending up on her knees when Amélie landed a hard kick to her stomach. She was overwhelmed with the urge to vomit, regretting eating all that cake. She tried speaking but was cut off by a kick to the head. The world started to spin. She watched through dizzy eyes as Amélie made the walk back to the car, getting in and driving off.

Lena sat down hunched over until the pain lessened and she no longer felt like she was going to puke. She held her head in her hands and tried to focus her vision. "That didn't go well."

-

The drive to the hospital was quiet. Fareeha was with Angela in the back. Her upper torso rested in Angela's lap, skilled hands putting pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding. Ana was driving as fast as she could to the nearest hospital, grateful that Reinhardt stayed behind with Hana to wait for Lena.

The hospital staff were quick to action. Fareeha was already laying face down on a hospital bed as the doctor disinfected the wound. She focused her gaze on Angela who was sitting in a chair right beside her. She tried to smile so Angela wouldn't look so worried but ended up grimacing when she felt the needle pierce her skin.

"I've never been a big fan of stitches," Fareeha gritted out.

Angela tried to calm down, sensing that Fareeha needed someone to talk to rather than someone worrying over her. "I don't think anyone is."

Fareeha's brow furrowed as the needle passed through a particularly sensitive area of her back. "I knew a guy."

“You knew a guy.”

“Yeah, he was quite the character.”

-

When the three of them got back home from the hospital, they came upon the sight of Hana disinfecting Lena’s cuts and scrapes.

Angela strode over to the two of them. “What happened to you?”

Lena winced. “I ran after the woman from the rooftop.”

Ana seemed interested in what Lena had to say. “What did you find out?”

Lena winced again. “Could we talk about this later?” She eyed Angela from the corner of her eye. “I took a hit to the head and everything’s a bit woozy.”

Ana took the hint, asking no more questions.

Angela was concerned. “Should I take a look? You shouldn’t take head injuries lightly.”

“Oh no, that’s alright.” She pointed to Hana. “I’ve got this one here to look after me. She’ll come get you if I start dying. Isn’t that right Hana?”

The girl nodded. She was too concentrated on disinfecting the cuts to say anything.

“See? I’m in good hands. Now, it looks like your girl over there is about to pass out. I think she needs more attention than me.”

Angela glanced over at Fareeha to find that the woman barely had her eyes open, struggling to stay conscious. She smiled at her love’s attempt to stay awake. “Come on.” She took one of her hands. “Let’s go to bed.”

The walk back to Fareeha’s room was short. Angela had led Fareeha to the edge of the bed, having her sit down. She walked over to Fareeha’s wardrobe and pulled out a shirt. It took her a couple of minutes to get out of the dress she wore but eventually she was able put on the oversized shirt, buttoning it up most of the way.

She returned to Fareeha, the woman struggling with the ripped blood-soaked shirt. “Here, I’ll get that for you.” Angela gently pulled the shirt off opting to just throw it on the floor. Fareeha started to take off her pants, gritting her teeth when she bent too far down. “I’ll get those too.” The pants soon joined the shirt on the floor.

Angela climbed over to the other side of the bed and got underneath the covers. She pulled the blankets down on the side Fareeha sat on and patted the space next to her. Fareeha got under the covers and made her way to Angela. She rested her head on the blonde’s shoulder and closed her eyes.

The silence stretched out forever. Angela let the events of the day pass through her mind. She tried not to dwell on the woman who threw the knife. They were safe now. She had Fareeha by her side and she was okay. The soft breathing coming from the other woman was enough to convince her that Fareeha fell asleep. She closed her eyes and let the exhaustion take her, surprised when Fareeha suddenly spoke up.

“Good night.”

“Sweet dreams Fareeha.”

# Ten

## Chapter Summary

Fareeha's not feeling so well. Some stories are shared. And a really long time in the bathroom

## Chapter Notes

Whoo, I finally updated this. I was totally going to do it yesterday but I got caught up in reading Carrogath's 'new homes' fic. So I spent my day doing that instead of finishing this, because I'm also a big fan of Symmbra. Then there was also that thing about that waterfall and by golly, I don't know why it was easier to update From Innocence than this one. (hint, I totally do know why. I need to actually outline this thing)

Also, I'm preeeeetty sure the rating is still teen. Pretty sure.

So um, there's like a small part where Fareeha is throwing up. If that's not something you'd like to read, it's marked with three dashes. So from seeing these guys ---, you can skip it if you want to.

Anyway, enjoy.

Angela lightly traced the stitches along Fareeha's back. They were an angry red, the skin swelling along the wound. Fareeha's skin felt hot, beads of sweat lining her furrowed brows as she slept. Angela was trying her best to keep calm, having already barged into Ana's room with a list of everything she needed. *There was something on that blade.* She ran her palm along Fareeha's back when the sleeping woman started to groan in pain, brown eyes pinched tight.

"Don't worry, I've got you." Angela reached over to the side table, wringing out the wet cloth sitting in the bowl of water. She started dabbing along hot skin, trying to alleviate the heat.

"Angela." Fareeha stirred from her sleep, nausea and pain wracking her body. "I don't feel so good." She reached out and grabbed Angela's free hand, her grip loose. "Did the stitches get infected?"

"No." She dipped the cloth back in the bowl, straining the excess water with a little bit of difficulty since she was now using one hand. "There must have been something on that knife." She started wiping down Fareeha's arms.

Brown eyes were staring across the bed, blinking slowly. "Hana yanked you down first." Fareeha shivered at the relief of the cool cloth running along her skin. "It was meant for you."

Angela ignored the implications of the statement, choosing to focus on making the pain more bearable for Fareeha. "Whatever was on that blade, you seem to be reacting well to it." *Otherwise you would have died sleeping right beside me.* She stilled her hand at the thought, droplets of

water dripping onto the sheets.

“Hey,” Fareeha squeezed the doctor’s hand. “I’ll be okay.” She let go of Angela’s hand and tried to sit up, failing miserably when Angela pressed her back into the bed.

“You’re not going anywhere. Not until I know you won’t die on me.”

Fareeha closed her eyes. “I took the day off so it would be just the two of us.” She tried to hold back the urge to vomit. “This isn’t exactly what I pictured.”

Angela put the cloth on the rim of the bowl. “How about you tell me how you got these.” Fingertips trailed along the scars on Fareeha’s back. She stretched out next to Fareeha, supporting her head with her left arm, her right hand still searching through warm skin. “Let’s start with this one.” Her finger traced a smaller scar on Fareeha’s lower back.

“That’s where I got stabbed.” Fareeha kept her eyes closed, enjoying the feeling of Angela running her fingers along her skin.

“You got stabbed?” Angela’s heartbeat picked up, the concern shining through her voice.

“It happened during my first night watch. I was still a fresh-faced soldier at the time. I wasn’t aware of this but, at the time, there was an escaped prisoner running loose. I don’t think he knew who I was, I think I was just unlucky. I remember that I was grabbed from behind, this burning pain shooting from my back.”

“So what happened?”

“I flipped him over and knocked him out. I sat next to his unconscious body, sticking a lit flare in the ground and holding onto the wound hoping I wouldn’t bleed to death. When they got to us, I was on the verge of passing out. They dragged him away from me as soon as they got there. I remember that they shook him awake. His face went pale while they screamed at him, telling him who I was.” Fareeha went quiet.

Angela continued to smooth her thumb over the scar, waiting for Fareeha to continue.

“They shot him.” Fareeha lifted her hand, touching her forehead. “Right here.”

“We don’t have to talk about this if you don’t want to.”

“No, no I’m okay. I’ve come to terms with it a while ago. Besides, I want to be able to share these things with you.” Fareeha let the next wave of nausea pass. “That was the first time I really felt the weight of what it means to be called ‘protector’.”

Angela walked her fingers back up to Fareeha’s ribs. “And here?”

Fareeha grimaced. “Drunk officers thinking it’s a good idea to hold a shooting competition.”

Angela gasped. “No.”

“You should have seen the looks on their faces when Sergeant Amari got to send First Lieutenant Misah and Captain Basara back to training with a demotion for reckless behavior. It was kind of a good day.”

“Even though you got shot.”

“It was more like a graze really.”

“A bullet punctured your skin, you got shot.” Angela reached out and wiped away the bead of sweat forming on Fareeha’s forehead. She sat up and reached over to the bowl, dipping the cloth inside and bringing it to Fareeha’s face to dab away at her warm skin. “And the burn on your shoulder?”

“There was a fire.” Fareeha started breathing through her teeth, the pain from her wound flaring up. “We built a refugee camp during the war. It was mainly just a bunch of abandoned buildings with tents set up all around. For a while it was peaceful. We’d meet refugees at the docks and drive them over to the camp. It was a sight for sore eyes, children running around without a care in the world with their families.”

Angela started wiping down Fareeha’s back again.

“It was night time when a fire had broken out. I later found out that it was the work of some Shimada allied soldiers. The flames were fueled by some sort of accelerant, and the camp was up in flames in the matter of minutes. I was outside of the camp with a transport truck checking on the supplies it brought. People were running, shouting about a fire and gunshots. So I ran in.”

“And that’s how you got burned?”

“Ah, that’s...that’s.” Fareeha squeezed her eyes shut, a single tear running down her cheek. “I was checking around one of the buildings when I heard a gunshot. By the time I got down the burning hallway, I heard another gunshot. Everything was on fire. Something was blocking the door from the other side so I used my shoulder to ram it until it opened. I remember the heat but, at the time, I didn’t really feel the pain.”

Angela wiped away the tears running down Fareeha’s face.

“There was a girl. Her parents were on the ground, their blood pooling around her. In front of her was a man. He had his gun aimed right for her. She just sat there with her eyes closed. She was *waiting* for him to pull the trigger. So I fired first.”

Angela felt the tears streaming down her own face, Hana’s words from earlier ringing in her head. *She was the one that found me you know?* “Hana.”

Fareeha nodded her head, sucking in her breath to try and calm down. “Yeah.”

Angela leaned forward, placing gentle kisses on the burn mark, pressing her forehead against Fareeha’s shoulder when she felt another wave of tears. She leaned back, wiping away the tears, readjusting herself so she was lying on her back. “Come here.” Angela helped Fareeha move so that dark locks were splayed out over her chest, a warm arm wrapped around her midsection. She started running her fingers along Fareeha’s hair.

They lied there, just holding each other.

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Amélie paced through her hotel room. Her earlier conversation with Hanzo still lingered in her mind.

“*What do you mean you didn’t get her?*”

“*The girl yanked her down before my knife could reach her.*” Amélie averted her eyes.

“*What aren’t you saying?*”

*Amélie took her time before answering. “Amari.”*

*Hanzo’s fist balled up. “You got Ana instead?”*

*“No.”*

*“You’re telling me the protector of Egypt is dead?”*

*Amélie was quick to respond. “No, it just cut her.”*

*“With what you put on your knives, she’s as good as dead.” Hanzo sighed into his hand. “You were just supposed to see if the rumors were true, taking out the target if there was a low risk opportunity.”*

*“She’ll be fine,” Amélie snipped back. “A cobra’s never killed an Amari.”*

*Hanzo sighed again, his eyes softening. “For your sake, I hope that you’re right.”*

*She covered her face with her palm. “Just go.” She gestured towards the door, letting out another breath when Hanzo’s footsteps got closer to the door. When the sound of the door closing shut echoed through the room, Amélie let out a shuddering sigh.*

*“She’ll be fine.”* Worry started to gnaw at the back of her mind as she paced. *“She’ll be fine.”*

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Ana knocked once on the door before coming in, stopping in the doorway at the sight of Fareeha and Angela wrapped up in each other. She held the cup in her hands closer to her chest. She would have let them be if Fareeha wasn’t suffering. “I mixed everything like you said.”

Angela slowly sat up, gently helping Fareeha sit up as well. She had an arm wrapped around Fareeha’s shoulders, letting the other woman lean into her. “Thank you Ana.” Angela leaned forward to reach for the cup, Ana meeting her the rest of the way.

Ana studied the inflamed wound on Fareeha’s back. The symptoms and the way the wound swelled seemed familiar. And then it clicked. “I wouldn’t worry too much Angela.”

Angela furrowed her brows. “And why’s that?”

“It’s snake venom.” Ana placed a hand on her daughter’s shoulder. “Fareeha, what was it they said about Amari’s again?”

Angela could feel Fareeha smile into her neck. “A cobra’s never killed an Amari.”

“Yes that’s it.” Ana gave Fareeha a pat on the shoulder. “So I’ll leave you two, and hopefully Fareeha will be feeling better soon.” She turned to leave, quietly opening the door and leaving just as silently.

“What’s this about cobras?”

Fareeha straightened, lifting her face so she was looking at Angela’s. “Imagine this. There’s a big feast, the protector of Egypt sitting at the head of the table. He takes a sip of his drink, suddenly feeling ill. A couple days of bedrest and it’s like he’s never swallowed cobra venom. And there’s a little girl playing by herself in her room. She screams. When they open the door, the first thing they see is the girl on the floor, an Egyptian cobra coiled up next to her. She’s playing in her room again a week later.” Fareeha paused to catch her breath, wiping away the droplets from her

forehead. “No Amari has ever has died from cobra venom.” Fareeha leaned back on Angela. “I keep saying cobra but I mean any venomous snake really. There are tons of stories. Even mother got bitten once.”

Angela had her brows raised in surprise. “That’s...incredible.” She ran a finger along Fareeha’s forearm. “Do you think...” Her fingertips rested on a vein. “Never mind, maybe some other time.” She nudged Fareeha up again, placing the cup in her hands. “This will help.”

Fareeha looked down into the green liquid, her nose scrunching up at the smell. “I have a bad feeling about this.”

Angela gave her a sheepish smile. “...you’re not wrong. This drink will make you vomit. It works its own magic against toxins. But you’ll feel better after that. So drink up.”

Fareeha continued to stare into the drink, weighing her options before downing the whole thing in one go. She shuddered at the taste. “How long will it take to work?”

“It varies.” Angela ran her finger along Fareeha’s abdomen, stopping at the scar she found. “Tell me about this one.”

Fareeha chuckled. “That was an accident. It happened two years ago.”

Angela flattened her palm against the scar, smiling at the vague description Fareeha gave her. “And what was the accident?”

“I accidentally scared Hana.”

Angela gasped. “Don’t tell me she stabbed you too.”

“No, she didn’t.” Fareeha laughed. “She pushed me and I landed on one of those piles she has around her room. There was a piece of wood with a nail sticking out of it. I landed on my side and also on the nail. After I stopped bleeding, she apologized profusely saying that she wanted to make something but gave up after getting the nail through the wood. She even promised to keep her room clean from then on. That didn’t last too long.”

“It seems that you’re always getting hurt.”

“Mm.”

“Fareeha?”

Fareeha shot out of bed, her hand covering her mouth. She headed straight for her bathroom.

“Oh.”

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Angela slowly dropped off from the bed, tiptoeing her way to the bathroom. She stopped at the open door, the sounds of Fareeha retching into the toilet filling the room. She sounded miserable. Angela reached up and let her hair down. She walked over to Fareeha, kneeling next to the woman when she was close enough.

Fareeha had tears streaming down her face, her throat was on fire and she was drained of energy. Every time she had to throw-up again, she felt like she was suffocating. Then she felt her hair being gently pulled back. Angela had tied it up, rubbing soothing circles on her shoulder.

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“Never again.” Fareeha sat back. Her breathing started to even out as she enjoyed taking in steady air again. There was a calm that washed over her, the pain having left her body. She took another huff of air and smiled. She didn’t feel nauseous anymore. Fareeha tried to get up but found that her legs had gone numb. “I can’t get up.”

“Want me to help you up?”

“Maybe we could sit here for a bit?”

Angela smirked. “And why not on the bed?”

“I’m covered in sweat. I want to take a bath soon.”

Angela wrapped her arms around Fareeha, bringing her closer but careful not to agitate the wound. “You know you can’t get in the bath all the way with your stitches right?”

“I’ll figure something out.”

Angela started running her fingers along Fareeha’s stomach. “You don’t have to. I’ll take care of you.” She placed a kiss on Fareeha’s shoulder. “So we can sit here as long as you want, and then we can take a bath.”

“Angela if you wanted to see me naked, you could have just asked.” Fareeha laughed when she felt the pinch on her arm.

“You’ve been practically naked this whole time. You’ve just got a pair of underwear on.”

Fareeha paused in her laughter. “You know, you have a point.”

“I didn’t have the chance to appreciate the view though. It’s very unprofessional to ogle when someone’s suffering.”

“And now?”

“Well,” started Angela. “I have to say Fareeha, you’re nothing short of beautiful. Breathtaking really.” She began inching her hands down Fareeha’s thighs, stopping when she reached her knees. She started swirling her fingers, smiling when she felt a leg twitch. “I *would* like to see your legs more often.” Angela pressed another kiss to Fareeha’s shoulder.

“I-I’ll keep that in mind.” Fareeha began to stand up, Angela getting up with her. She walked to the sink and immediately began to rinse her mouth. Pulling out her toothbrush, she put some toothpaste on it and started brushing her teeth.

Angela stood there with wide eyes. “I didn’t brush my teeth yet.” Fareeha muttered something incomprehensible and reached under the sink, pulling out another toothbrush. Angela took the offered toothbrush, squeezing some of Fareeha’s toothpaste on it and leaned over so that they were sharing the sink.

Some toothpaste dribbled down Fareeha’s chin. Angela tried to show her but ended up sputtering her own toothpaste on Fareeha’s cheek. “I’m so sorry.” More toothpaste splattered about. She watched with wide eyes as Fareeha wiped away the plethora on toothpaste on her face.

“I think this belongs to you.” Fareeha reached out for Angela, smearing the toothpaste on the blonde’s cheek. “That’s better.”

Angela wiped at her cheek, smudging the toothpaste back on Fareeha's face. "I insist you have it. A gift from me to you."

Fareeha turned the sink on. "A gift?" She rinsed her mouth, cupping her hands under the water again to splash her face. "I think your gift went down the drain."

Angela leaned over and rinsed out her mouth. "It wasn't a special gift or anything. No hurt feelings." She put her toothbrush down and walked over to the bath, turning the water on and waiting for it to fill. Angela gestured for Fareeha to get closer, wrapping her arms around the other woman's neck. "Can I get a kiss?"

"Mmhm." Fareeha wrapped her arms around Angela's waist, pulling her closer before leaning in. The doctor's lips were soft and warm against her's. They kissed slowly, Angela occasionally smiling at the smell of toothpaste covering Fareeha's face.

Angela let go first. She backed away with a smile, getting to the bath and turning off the water. She reached up and unclasped her necklace, taking off her rings and putting them on the chain. Angela placed the chain on the sink counter and walked over to Fareeha again. She started to unbutton the borrowed shirt when Fareeha reached out a hand to stop her.

"Let me." Angela dropped her hands, letting Fareeha continue where she left off. As Fareeha worked her way down, her fingertips would sometimes brush against Angela's skin, leaving a tingling feeling in their wake. "You know, I feel like I've seen this shirt before."

"Hmm, that is entirely plausible."

"It looks like it would fit me perfectly." Fareeha finished with the last button.

"I don't doubt that for a second." Angela bit her lip at the sensation of Fareeha pushing the shirt off her shoulders, warm hands leaving a burning trail as they traveled down her arms. She heard the shirt drop to the ground, Angela paying it no mind as Fareeha brought her hands back up to travel down her waist, stopping at her hips. Angela pulled Fareeha's hands down to the waistband of her underwear, pressing those fingers down to encourage her further. She shook with excitement when Fareeha started pulling down her panties, biting her lip when she heard a sharp inhale.

Angela let her last piece of clothing fall to the floor. She stepped out of her underwear, hooking her thumbs Fareeha's. She looked up into brown eyes, the pupils expanding with desire. With a slight nod from Fareeha, Angela continued her task, slowly pulling the underwear down and enjoying the sight of the slight quivering of Fareeha's abdomen.

Fareeha felt Angela's hands roaming her stomach, her heartbeat quickening when she felt soft lips tracing the trails left behind by roving fingertips. It could have been the steam from the bath but Fareeha was sure Angela was the main cause.

Angela was suddenly pulled up, her lips caught in a heat seared kiss. Her body was pulled close and her mind was reeling from the way Fareeha's hands left trails of fire in their wake. All of her thoughts flew out the window, concentrating solely on Fareeha's tongue exploring her mouth and the sound of her thundering heartbeat.

Fareeha blinked a few times when Angela suddenly pulled away, following along helplessly when she was pulled to the bath. She watched Angela step into the water first, the blonde gently leading her inside until she reached the middle of the steps.

"You sit right there," said Angela. She bent over to give the still stunned woman a quick kiss

before looking for the soap. "I'll wash your back so the stitches don't get soaked."

Fareeha nodded silently until she could find her voice again. "Can I wash yours?"

"Of course you can." Angela handed Fareeha the shampoo. She chuckled when Fareeha leaned forward to dunk her head under the water.

When Fareeha lifted her head from the water, she poured some shampoo in her palm and began to lather it in her hair. She felt eyes on her the whole time she was scrubbing away at her hair. "Are you watching me wash my hair?"

"Mhmm. You look cute sitting there hunched over scrubbing away."

Fareeha laughed. She leaned forward again to rinse out her hair. "Keep saying things like that and I might get the idea that you like me."

"I think we're passed that point by now." Angela reached over for the shampoo. "I could have sworn we were already in love." This time, Angela watched as Fareeha stared at her. "I don't think you're watching me wash my hair."

"Not in the slightest. Nice view though."

Angela smirked, deliberately slowing down her actions and watching as Fareeha grinned when she caught on. She walked closer to the sitting woman, straddling a single thigh between her own and wrapping her arms around Fareeha's shoulders. "And what about this view?"

Fareeha didn't reply. Instead, she leaned her head up and kissed Angela with the same passion as before. She enveloped her arms around Angela's waist, earning a gasp from the blonde when Fareeha pulled her forward. Fareeha felt her blood pumping when Angela tightened her hold, breaking their kiss to bury her head in Fareeha's shoulder as she rocked forward. Fareeha started kissing down Angela's neck. And then she stopped.

Angela didn't realize Fareeha had stopped, only noticing when she suddenly found herself submerged in the water. When Fareeha pulled her back up, she could only sputter and stare wide eyed at the woman holding her.

"You still had shampoo in your hair," said Fareeha. "It got in my mouth."

Angela detached herself from Fareeha and stood back up, reaching over for the soap. "You're lucky you have stitches." She handed Fareeha some soap and started washing her body, giving the other woman a glare when Fareeha just grinned.

"Lucky me."

As they got clean, Angela felt her resolve slowly breaking when Fareeha just sat there looking at her with pouty eyes. She finally broke when Fareeha added a quiver to her bottom lip for good measure.

"Come here." She watched Fareeha get up, feeling her lips curving up when Fareeha gave an infectious smile. "Turn around." She started carefully washing Fareeha's back, mindful of the wound. Angela's smile widened when she felt Fareeha running a hand along her hip, fingertips caressing her thigh before starting back up again. "Keep that up and I just might forgive you."

Fareeha quickly turned them around when Angela was done washing her back, running soap along Angela's back in return. She freed a hand to continue her ministrations from before. When she was done she placed a kiss to Angela's shoulder. Angela had grabbed her roaming hand and

guided it downwards towards her center.

“We might have to get clean again after this.”

“I don’t care,” Angela breathed out. “Just don’t stop.”

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Fareeha sat on the edge of the bed, her head bowed while Angela ran a towel through her dark hair. They had been grinning at each other for the last ten minutes before Angela suggested that they get dressed.

“I want to find you something to wear, so sit tight okay?” Angela didn’t wait for a response, running giddily to Fareeha’s wardrobe, the rings on her necklace jangling about. First thing she did was steal another button down for herself, just throwing it on and deciding to button it up later. Her eyes lit up when she found a pair of shorts, quickly grabbing the soft shirt her hand passed over earlier and a pair of underwear as well.

“Look what I found.” Angela held the pair of shorts up as she walked to the bed.

“You weren’t kidding about the legs thing.” Fareeha reached out to grab the clothes. She ran her thumb over the dark blue shirt. “This is actually my favorite shirt. It’s so soft.”

Angela was busy unclasping her necklace. She took the gold band off the chain and kept the other two hanging on it. Placing the ring on her finger and admiring it for a moment, she started buttoning up the shirt she wore. “I picked it out because I thought it wouldn’t irritate your stitches as much. And blue really is your color.”

Fareeha stopped mid-way through putting on her shirt, putting it down in her lap to give Angela a small smile. “I love you.” Her heart fluttered when Angela stopped at the last two buttons to smile back at her.

“I love you too.” There were back to staring at each other again. It didn’t last as long when Angela shook her head and pointed to the shirt in Fareeha’s lap. “You should put on your shirt.”

Fareeha smirked defiantly. “And why’s that?”

“Well, I would like an escort to my room so I can get dressed.”

“You look fine to me.”

Angela took a moment to contemplate her next words. “I at least want to put on some underwear.”

Fareeha seemed to mull over the request. She picked the shirt up and quickly put it on. “Okay, we should eat then too.” She rubbed at her stomach. “With that whole snake venom thing and all that...exercise, I’m starving.”

Angela reached for Fareeha’s arm, gently coaxing her into a standing position. “Then let’s go.”

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Ana was walking past, when she saw Angela and Fareeha running through the hallway. They rounded the corner and disappeared, laughter echoing behind them. She smiled and continued on her way to the kitchen. It was mid-afternoon by now so when she got there, she set the kettle on the stove and pulled out a pot. Ana put together a quick soup and waited for it to heat up. She had a feeling those two would be here any minute now with a healthy appetite. They hadn’t eaten

since last night.

To her surprise Hana came busting through the kitchen, Lena in tow.

“See I told you nana was making something.”

Lena was catching her breath, holding onto her aching stomach. “Alright, I will never doubt you ever again.”

Hana looked up at her grandmother with puppy eyes. “Is there enough for me too?”

“For you, of course there is.” Ana eyed Lena with an apologetic expression.

“Oh don’t worry about me.” Lena patted her stomach. “My stomach is still having a rough go of it. It took one hell of a kick.”

Ana turned back to the stove to stir the soup. “If you say so.” She pointed to a basket on the counter. “There’s some bread if you change your mind.”

Hana led Lena to the dining room so they can sit and wait. “How much does your face hurt?” She pointed to the scabbed over cuts littering Lena’s face.

Lena tentatively touched a scab, wincing with the slightest pressure. “Still a good amount of pain there.”

Hana changed her gaze to stare at her own lap. “I’m sorry that happened to you.”

“Hey now. No need to feel sorry about it.” She nudged Hana’s shoulder to grab her attention. “Scrapes and bruises heal. I went out there just to get my arse handed to me. What you did for Angela was the real heroic deed. So chin up, you should count yourself as a hero.”

Hana gave a small smile, resisting the urge to look back at her lap.

“I mean, this whole snake venom thing really blows my mind the more I think about it.” Lena started to wave her hands about. “When Ana told us about it earlier I couldn’t believe it. Even now, it’s still mind boggling. Can you imagine what would have happened if that knife hit Angela instead?” She watched the gears turn in Hana’s head.

“So I’m a hero huh?”

“Yep, up there with the best of them.”

“I can live with that.” Hana perked up when Ana brought the soup out, placing a bowl of the meal in front of Hana.

“Heroes need to eat up.” She put the basket of bread near the soup, and took out two more bowls, placing them in front of empty chairs.

Hana blushed at the comment. “Thank you nana.”

Ana just smiled, walking back into the kitchen to retrieve her fresh pot of tea and more cups. She came back to the table and poured a cup, offering it to Lena. “Do you want some tea at least?”

Lena took the offered cup. She was never one to turn down tea made by Ana. “Thank you.”

“It’ll be fine.” All eyes turned to Fareeha consoling Angela on their way to the dining room. “No one’s going to say anything about you not wearing any pants.”

They stopped in the archway when they noticed everyone sitting at the table. Angela's eyes went wide at what they must have heard. Her face started to turn red.

Fareeha gave Ana, Hana, and Lena a look that said 'don't say anything'. She took one of Angela's hands and led the blushing blonde to the table. "Did you just make this?" She walked over and gave Ana a kiss on the cheek.

"I wanted to make sure my girls were fed." Ana watched Fareeha walk over to Hana, watching her daughter give the girl a kiss as well.

"Even this one?" Fareeha had her arm wrapped around Hana's shoulder, mussing the girl's hair as she stood there.

Ana grinned. "Especially that one." Her grin widened when Angela leaned down to give her a peck on the cheek as well. She noticed the doctor seemed to have gotten over her embarrassment.

Hana looked up at Fareeha, ignoring the fact that her hair probably needed to be brushed again. "How are you feeling mama? Nana told me about the snake venom." She blushed when Angela came over to give her a kiss as well.

"I am feeling better than ever." Fareeha mussed Hana's hair one more time before joining Angela at her seat. She started filling her bowl, silence coming over the table when everyone was eating or drinking tea. It felt nice just to enjoy each other's company.

Lena broke the silence when she was finished with her cup. "So what *did* happen to your pants Angela?

Laughter echoed through the dining room as Fareeha struggled to keep Angela away from Lena, the blonde glaring daggers at said woman while the deep red blush slowly crept up her face again.

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It was the middle of the night when Lena sleepily opened her door. To her surprise, Ana was standing at the doorway, a serious expression on her face. *It must be three in the morning or something.* She rubbed at her eyes and waited for Ana to speak.

"You know who was on that roof."

Lena was suddenly awake. She glanced back to her window, her eyes tracking the added security personnel patrolling outside. Lena sighed and leaned against the doorway. "It was Amélie"

# Eleven

## Chapter Summary

Too much happens in the middle of the night.

## Chapter Notes

Just a fair warning, there's a bunch of Shimada angst.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*It was pitch black, nothing but the glow of the fire to illuminate the darkness that surrounded them. Ana sat on the ground scraping the last bit of food from the can she held. Jesse sat to her left, taking his time with his meal, eyes scanning the black void. Their night watch was halfway over.*

*“We walk right in.”*

*Jesse paused in his eating, spoon hovering in the air. “Say that again Ana.”*

*Ana put her can down, returning to watching the perimeter with narrowed eyes. She took a while to respond, concentrating on the movement in the distance. A pair of shining eyes blinked in the night, Ana turning back to Jesse to continue where they left off. “We’re going to just walk into the Shimada camp.”*

*The can clanked to the ground, food spilling out onto the grass when it settled. Jesse coughed a few times, tapping his chest to stem the flow of coughing. “That’s Genji’s camp we’re talking about. We’re just gonna walk right in?” He reached down for his can, scraping what he could salvage and spooning it into his mouth. “There’s something you’re not telling me.”*

*Ana went back to surveying the perimeter. “I have good intel.”*

*Jesse wasn’t convinced. “And who told you this?”*

*A brief side glance. “You’ll see tomorrow night. I can’t say much more about who it is tonight.” Ana felt the eyes on the back of her head. “Do you trust me Jesse?”*

*“On my life I do.”*

*“Good.” Ana smiled. “Then you have nothing to worry about.”*

-

*“There’s no backing out of this now.” Jesse walked beside Ana as they trudged through the trees. A quick look back to see a battalion of troops close behind.*

*“Don’t worry.” Ana gave a signal, the battalion behind her stopping in their tracks. “No matter*

*what, we'll come out on top." She gestured for Jesse to follow her, pointing to the gates in front of them. "What do you see?"*

*Jesse took a quick look around the gate, quickly coming to a realization. "There's no guards. No lookouts."*

*Ana nodded. "He'll be coming soon."*

*"The one that's getting us in?"*

*"Yes."*

*Jesse opened his mouth to say something only to be quickly hushed by Ana. His gaze followed where she nodded her chin. A figure clad in black walked towards them. His face was partially covered, jet black hair and pained eyes glinting in the light from the lamp posts.*

*The man stopped in front of the two of them, pulling down the cloth from his face. His face was contorted in a strained expression, eyes downcast towards the ground.*

*"Are you sure about this Genji?" asked Ana.*

*Genji started muttering something to himself. His fists were balled up, shaking from the strain. "What does it say about a man who has no goodness in his heart?" Dark eyes looked up, locking with Ana's. He stopped shaking. "They shouldn't put up too much of a fight." He took sure steps towards the gate, pushing it open with one arm. The gate budged open a little. Genji slowly turned back around, focusing on Ana again.*

*Ana saw the flecks of pain in his eyes, agony deep rooted in their dark depths. His breathing was slow and steady, the only sign of anything wrong being the slight shiver of an exhale every now and then. He looked broken.*

*"They're all drunk," said Genji.*

*"Genji..." started Ana.*

*Jesse flinched when he saw Genji suddenly burst into laughter. He watched the other man support himself on the gate, bent over and clutching at his chest. Sharp eyes followed the path of a single tear. He looked away, the display feeling far too personal.*

*"Ana." Genji let the remaining laughter leave his system, wiping the tear from his face when he finally finished. "After this, you won't see me again." Gloved fingers reached for the cloth around his neck, pulling it up to cover his face again. Genji briefly glanced over to Jesse who was still averting his gaze before settling on Ana one last time. A small sigh escaped his lips, eyes cast to the ground below. He put his hands behind his back, holding them tight together. He started the walk back from where he came, disappearing into the night.*

*A moment passed between the two left behind. "That was..." started Jesse. He looked to Ana, searching for the answers to what he just saw. Ana just shook her head, a deep sigh escaping her lips.*

*A quick glance to where Genji disappeared and Ana was focused again. "At my signal, we take the camp."*

-

*Lena was left sitting at the edge of her bed. Ana had left less than a minute ago after their talk, her*

eye narrowed in determination. A sinking feeling settled at the pit of her stomach. She bolted out of bed, heading straight for the wardrobe. Taking out a long-sleeved shirt, Lena quickly pulled it over her head while she walked over to where her shoes were. A quick slip on each foot, hurriedly grabbing her accelerator from the window sill immediately afterwards, Lena rushed after Ana.

She ran down the hallway, quickly turning the corner before catching up to Ana. “Ana, where are you going?” Lena stopped to catch her breath when Ana stopped.

“I’m going to find out who this woman is.” Ana started walking again, listening to Lena following behind her.

“It’s the middle of the night.” Ana didn’t say anything. Lena picked up the pace, now within arm’s reach of the other woman. Ana made it to the front door before she reached out and grabbed the older woman’s wrist. “At least let me go with you. I don’t want anything to happen to you.”

Ana considered Lena’s words. Her other hand hovered over the door handle, fingers slightly twitching in her desire to keep going. She sighed. “They’re going to get worried if we’re both gone.”

“But shouldn’t they be worried already?” Lena’s brows furrowed. “I understand that you want to give them time, to keep everything under control until you can’t any longer. But things are happening. They sent someone to kill Angela. They could go after Fareeha.” She dropped her hand, worried filled eyes pleading with Ana. “They might go after you too.”

A hand held onto the door handle, fingers tapping the metal. “And what about you?”

Lena blinked, the question throwing her off balance. “What about me?”

“Don’t you think something could happen to you?”

Lena crossed her arms, tilting her head to the side. “We’re all at risk, yeah?”

Ana squeezed the handle, opening the door. She took a step forward and paused. “Then let’s go.” Footsteps echoed behind her as she continued walking.

-

*The hardwood flooring was harsh against his knees. His feet were already numb, hands balled at his knees and curled tight. Hanzo had his gaze lowered, eyes cast away from his father sitting before him. A quick glance to the left showed a man in a similar position. He was shaking, eyes wide at the floor.*

*“A whole unit, gone.” The face of his father held barely contained rage. “One soldier got away.” Harsh eyes flitted to the man shaking in the corner. “Do you know what he told me?”*

*Hanzo balled his fists tighter. He wasn’t supposed to answer the question.*

*“Ana Amari. Her troops walked through the gate and took the camp. They just walked right in.” The elder Shimada pressed his palm to the table in front of him, his tea sloshing from the shaking of his hand. “His whole unit gone and your brother nowhere to be found.” He took a calming breath. “Genji is blood no longer.” A calm sip of tea, any trace of anger gone. “Make your family proud Hanzo.”*

*Hanzo uncurled his fists, his fingers flattening over his knees to keep balance. His head filled with chilled dread. It felt like the air was being choked out of his lungs, eyes wide with down casted*

*panic. Hanzo took short clipped breaths. He tried to conceal the trembling of his body, the instinct to contort his face from feeling the bile rising up to his throat. Slowly, he lifted his head, eyes focusing on his father's chin. "Yes father. I understand." He bowed and then rose to his feet, taking a moment to adjust to the sight of the world around him swirling. A shaking first step, and then he walked away, shoulders squared and face set like stone.*

-

*The river's surface glistened, Genji's reflection staring back at him. He could see the setting sun behind him. It looked peaceful. He allowed himself this moment. To try to find a sliver of contentedness. To forget about the ails that plagued him.*

*The shifting of grass brought Genji out of his thoughts. "I was wondering when you would find me."*

*"Why?" Hanzo's voice trembled in anger.*

*"Because we are not good people." Genji lifted his gaze from the water, turning his head to look at his brother. "What we are doing is more than I can bear."*

*"So you let Ana Amari lead a massacre?"*

*"Is that what happened?" Genji chuckled. "She never told me what she had planned." He stood up from the ground, an unsettling grin plastered on his face. "Either way, it's more than they deserved."*

*Hanzo's eye twitched, rage coiling in the pit of his stomach at Genji's display. "They were your people. You were supposed to look after them."*

*"Look after them?" Another laugh. "My **people** were a pack of thieves and murderers." A tear fell down his cheek. "And so am I."*

*"What we are doing is- "*

*"Despicable," interrupted Genji. "For years I thought the world father created was perfect. That everything I did was justified. I put myself above the people that we killed. I turned my eyes away from the homes we've stolen." He wiped away the tear from his cheek. "Not once did I stop to think for myself. I believed **everything** father said. I tried so hard to give him what he wanted. We were the scourge of the earth, and I didn't see it until now."*

*The strain around his eyes elevated some. Hanzo stared into the eyes of the broken man before him, his anger subsiding. "Genji, the work we've done, the people that were lost. It won't be in vain." Genji laughed again, bent over at the knees, tears running down his face. Hanzo felt his temper rising again.*

*"You know, you're the worst of them." Genji stood back up. A sleeved arm wiped at his eyes. "You still think you're doing a good thing. Tell me brother, is it really worth it? What's stopping you from leaving with me?"*

*"You know I cannot do that."*

*"Why? Because of honor? Because of what father wants? What he asked of you?" Dark eyes hardened with hatred. "This sick notion of blood before cities has warped your mind. Father only sees you as a tool, not a son. Do you really believe he thinks of us as family?" He broke eye contact with his brother, choosing to stare up into the sky, his mouth quirked up in contemplation. "If I had it my way," he started, "I'd have his head in a basket." Genji looked back to Hanzo.*

*“But that’s what he sent you for, isn’t it?” A blink and he was on the ground, standing on his knees.*

*Hanzo kicked in Genji’s back when he heard that unsettling laugh again. He unhooked his bow from his back, and started walking backwards, aiming an arrow straight for his brother’s head. “Is this what you wanted?”*

*“I just want to be at peace brother.” Genji closed his eyes and bowed his head. “Will you at least grant me that?”*

-

Hanzo woke up gasping. The moonlight shining through the window illuminated the dark hotel room. After speaking with Amélie, he returned to his room, choosing to spend his time in thought until he was tired enough to sleep. Throwing the blanket to the side, Hanzo sat up. A hand went up to his chest, clutching at damp skin from the memory. He closed his eyes, his body starting to shake from rage.

Once calmed enough, Hanzo swung his legs over the side of the bed and stood up. They were lying low until any hype that might have been stirred died down. A quick glance to the window, Hanzo headed towards it to check outside. If he couldn’t sleep, he might as well be on watch. The first thing that caught his eye was the shine of the moon. It looked so clear and bright, endlessly illuminating the region. He glanced to the street below. A group of kids ran down it, kicking a ball as they ran. “This late at night?” He watched them until they disappeared, balling up his fist as memories of Genji came flooding back.

Reaching down into his pocket, Hanzo pulled out a crumpled letter. He didn’t open it, choosing instead to just stare at the crinkled paper held in his hand. Some nights it was too much. Some nights he had the strength to read the letter. Hanzo started unfolding the letter, getting to the last fold before closing it back up again. He stuffed it back in his pocket, holding it there, waiting for the feeling of dread to pass.

The sounds of crickets chirping filled the room. Hanzo clutched at his face, tightening his hold, feeling his skull shake with the pressure. He tightened his grip even more, clutching tighter until he saw white. A shaky breath escaped his lips. Whispered apologies floating to the air. “I failed you.”

-

*A knock at the door brought Hanzo out of his planning. His camp was situated in a recently conquered region, the building he sat in repurposed for military strategy development. A map sat on the table before him, markers littering its surface illustrating allies and foes. He muttered a quick ‘come in’, choosing to scan the map a bit longer.*

*A man holding a bag came walking through the door. He reached into the bag and pulled out a letter. “A letter just arrived sir. It has the family seal.”*

*Hanzo quirked an eyebrow at this, looking up from the map to glance at the letter. He stopped what he was doing when he saw the familiar writing on the envelope addressed to him. Hanzo tentatively reached for the letter, holding it in the air when the messenger gave it to him. “Is this all?” His eyes stared at the wall, an empty feeling slowly replacing his thoughts.*

*“Yes sir. That is all.” The man waited patiently, fidgeting every so often as he watched Hanzo continue to stare off to the wall.*

*He snapped out of it. "You may leave." The man quickly bowed and spun around, walking briskly towards the door and disappearing into the hall. Images flashed through his mind. Blood splattered across the grass. His brother's slumped over body lying still on the ground, dull eyes looking out towards the river.*

*Slowly, Hanzo picked at the seal, peeling it off to get at the letter inside. He unfolded the paper with gentle fingers, hands shaking at the words from his dead brother.*

*Dear brother,*

*I don't know if this letter will ever reach you.*

*I saw something today. One of my soldiers shot a child. I saw the look in his face, the laugh coming from mouth as he held the gun at his side and looked at the boy who desperately reached up for help. He died by the time I could reach him.*

*So I wonder, what does it say about a man with no goodness in his heart?*

*I can't do it anymore. One way or another, I'm leaving. I think I'm going to do something. By the time you get this letter, should you ever get it, I'll probably be dead because of it. I just hope that one day, I can apologize to the boy, for everything that I've done.*

*Your brother,*

*Genji*

*It was short, composed of broken thoughts and shaky writing. Hanzo crumpled up the letter and tossed it across the room. Tear filled eyes watched it hit the wall. He looked down at the map before him, knocking off all the markers in an angry sweep of his arm. He stood up and started pacing. Each step brought him closer and closer to an unknown destination until finally he was face to face with the wall, the crumpled letter on the ground near his feet. Hanzo eyed the letter, suddenly punching the wall in an outburst of rage. His fist connected and he grimaced in time with the crack of his hand.*

*Over and over he saw his brother's body. Over and over he saw the pain hidden in those dark eyes. He held his broken fist in his uninjured hand, resting his forehead against the wall. The pain throbbed. He slowly slumped down the wall, forehead running along the textured surface. He stopped when he was bent over and standing on his toes.*

*Eyes flickered to the letter. Hanzo reached used his injured hand to pick it up, taking his time in smoothing out the crumpled paper. The pain stung. He folded the letter again, holding it to his chest. Tears fell down his cheeks. "What do I do?"*

-

Fareeha blinked her eyes open. Her face was buried in a pillow, an arm loosely wrapped around Angela's waist beside her. A shift of her head and she could see that it was the middle of the night. She could hear a car starting up, listening to it drive off until the sounds faded away.

Angela's face was turned away from her. She was on her back, pale arms spread out beside her, blonde hair strewn over a pillow. Fareeha watched the rise and fall of Angela's breathing. It felt like a dream. To have Angela beside her, moonlight illuminating her sleeping face. It made Fareeha's heart stop, kicking back in with steady thumps to her chest.

Fareeha lifted herself up on her elbows, scooting closer to rest her head on Angela's chest. She

closed her eyes and just listened. The strong steady beat was like a lullaby, Fareeha's eyes getting heavier the longer she listened. She let out a content sigh when sleepy arms moved to pull her closer, incoherent mumbling leaving Angela's lips while she shifted in her sleep.

A knock sounded on the door. Fareeha felt her heart jolt at the intruding sound. She opened her eyes, watching as the door opened. Hana was standing in the door way. Fareeha took in the watery eyes and the way Hana held onto her elbow. She slowly started untangling herself from Angela, fully sitting up afterwards.

Hana walked up the edge of the bed closet to Angela. "Mama..."

Fareeha could see the red puffy eyes and the tear stained cheeks illuminated by the moonlight. More tears threatened to fall. A quick glance down at Angela, Fareeha started putting some distance between them, scooting closer to the edge of the bed. She extended her hand, gesturing for Hana to get closer. "Come here."

Hana looked over to Angela and walked over to Fareeha's side of the bed. She climbed over her mother, wedging herself between Fareeha and Angela. "I'm sorry it's just..." Tears spilled over her cheeks, droplets hitting the sheets turning them dark.

"You don't have to say anything." Fareeha pulled Hana to her chest, holding her tight. Hana's tears ran down her neck, the girl starting to shake in her arms. Her stitches started to hurt a little, the strain of being on her side agitating the wound. She ignored the pain.

The bed moved and Hana felt another pair of arms wrap around her. Her tears intensified when Angela's head rested on her shoulder.

-

The next morning, the three of them came barreling out of Fareeha's room. Laughter echoed through the hallway. Bare feet thumping along the stone flooring. Angela carried Hana on her back, hands hooked beneath the girl's knees to keep her from falling. Fareeha was off to their side, keeping in pace with Angela and smiling at the other two.

"Since Angela is so good at it, does this mean I don't have to carry you anymore?"

Hana lifted her head in contemplation, stretching out her response time to emphasize her point. "Hmm. Guess not." She giggled when Angela spun them around. "See look. She makes it more fun too."

Fareeha smile. "Then it's settled. From now on, if you want someone to carry you, just ask Angela." A mischievous glint shone in her eye, carefully watching Hana's reaction.

Hana just pouted, looking away from Fareeha. "Fine, I will."

"Don't you two think I should get a say in this?" Angela grinned at the banter between Hana and Fareeha.

"I suppose it's only fair. So what do you say Angela?" Fareeha couldn't wipe the grin from her face, watching Angela sway Hana side to side on her back.

"Hmm well." Angela looked over she shoulder to Hana. "I'd carry you forever if you'd like."

"You hear that mama, Angela said forever."

Fareeha stretched out her arms. "Well good. I needed a break, my back's killing me."

Hana reached over to swat Fareeha on the arm, her mother ducking out of the way just before she could get a hit in. She watched Fareeha start out in a run, quickly getting Angela to put her down before chasing after.

Angela let out a relieved breath, following after the two as they ran to the dining room. When she got to the dining room, Fareeha and Hana were just standing there, looking at the empty table with confusion. "What's wrong?"

"My mother usually makes breakfast." Fareeha walked into the kitchen, returning just a quickly. She shifted to face Hana. "Hana could you-" The girl took off running before she could finish her request.

Angela watched Hana leave. "What's going on?"

"Hopefully nothing." Fareeha took the short steps towards Angela, grabbing her hand. She led them both inside the kitchen, letting go of the hand when she reached the counter. "My mother usually makes breakfast. She has for the past two years." She reached down in the bottom cabinet for the bag of rice, crossing the kitchen to open the fridge for the milk. Grabbing a pot, she set about making breakfast.

"So since she hasn't made breakfast, there's something wrong?"

"I'm hoping there's nothing to worry about."

Hana ran through the kitchen entryway, bending over and huffing her breath. "She's not here." She straightened up after catching her breath. "Lena isn't here either."

A silence hung over the room. Angela looked between the two deep in thought. "Maybe they just went out together?"

And then it clicked. Fareeha stopped stirring the pot in front of her. "I heard a car leaving in the middle of the night. It must have been them."

Hana seemed less worried. "So they're okay right?"

A smile from Fareeha. "I'm sure they're fine."

-

Ana and Lena were leaned against the car, a sandwich held by each.

"You really made that last guy nearly cry Ana." Lena bit into her sandwich.

Ana shrugs, taking a bite from her sandwich as well. "We found it didn't we?"

"Doesn't mean that you suddenly don't scare me anymore." The crisp bread and perfectly seasoned meat melted on Lena's tongue. "You have quite a way with intimidating people."

Ana shrugged again. "Sometimes you have to get your hands dirty to get what you want." She eyed the hotel down the street. "It hasn't failed me yet."

Lena nodding in understanding. "I'm still a little shook from our talk earlier. Would've given you my right arm if you asked." Another bite and Lena finished her sandwich. She dusted her hands together, wiping the bread crumbs from her fingers. "You ready to go?"

Ana eyed the rest of her sandwich, she still had half of it left. "In a bit. I'm still eating."

## Chapter End Notes

Don't worry guys, I'll make it up to you next chapter. I've also got something fluffy I'm working on as well.

# Twelve

## Chapter Summary

Continuing off from the morning before.

## Chapter Notes

Definitely more fluff towards the end. Enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“And there we go.” Angela straightened out Fareeha’s shirt collar, smoothing out any wrinkles from the shirt. The doctor stood at the edge of the bed between Fareeha’s legs, her fingers trailing along the smoothed material. “I think you’re ready to go.”

Fareeha chuckled at the announcement. “Oh? I’m ready to go?”

“Beautiful black hair combed through, check. Gold beads that make a cute clinking sound in the wind, check. A nice shirt that matches my eyes perfectly, check. And the lovely tie that yours truly put on for you? Check.” A pale finger made a trail downwards along the buttons of Fareeha’s shirt. “You look ready to me.”

“So I don’t need to go to work with pants on?”

“Oh, um.” A small blush crept its way up Angela’s cheeks. She looked down at Fareeha’s pants-less legs, trying to find anything to say about her small blunder. The cheeky smile that followed Angela’s brief moment of thought made Fareeha cock an eyebrow. “Well my darling, what was it that you told me?”

Fareeha couldn’t form a response, the feeling of Angela’s soft hands slowly making their way up her bare legs gradually made her forget that the rest of the world existed. The way Angela deliberately crawled into her lap when sure hands gripped her hips, steady blue eyes locked onto brown, Fareeha could have sworn that the world consisted of just Angela and her, together in that room.

Fareeha fell backwards onto the bed. Angela had her hands on either side of Fareeha’s head, smiling down at the still stunned woman. “Lost your voice?” Brown eyes just blinked up at Angela. “Let me remind you then, you said, *‘No one will notice that you’re not wearing any pants.’* Angela leaned down a bit, placing a small kiss to Fareeha’s cheek. “Or you can just stay here with me.”

“Or...” Fareeha sat up, bringing Angela up with her. “I can just put on some pants. As much as everyone would try their best to pretend that I *do* have pants on, it would make for an unproductive day with all the secret staring.” A quick kiss to pouty lips and Fareeha lifted Angela up, walking them to her wardrobe where the blonde reluctantly climbed down.

“Such nice legs don’t deserve to be hidden.” The pout persisted. A sigh escaped pink lips as she

watched Fareeha slip on the pants one leg at a time. Angela stood up on her toes, wrapping her arms around Fareeha's neck from behind and nuzzling the taller woman's neck. "Just come back safe okay? I love you."

Fareeha paused in putting on her belt. She reached up a hand to run a thumb over the skin of Angela's laced fingers. "I love you too."

-

The door to the hotel was pushed open with the clinging of a bell. The attendant at the front desk immediately straightened up when he saw the two serious looking women rapidly approaching.

"Welcome to Hotel- " The man wasn't able to finish his greeting, getting shaken off guard when Ana slammed a piece of paper onto the front desk.

"Is she here?" A gloved finger tapped the drawing of Amélie. The first thing Ana did when she got to Cairo was drag Lena to the nearest sketch artist to get a visual of the woman she was searching for.

The clerk attendant nervously scanned over the drawing, looking over to Lena every so often as she was the less intimidating of the two. "The woman is here." He gulped when Ana gave him an expectant look. "But I can't tell you what room she's in. Hotel policy."

Ana slapped her hand down on the piece of paper. "This woman tried to kill *your* protector on the night of her engagement. My daughter could have died." Never mind the details of who she was actually trying to kill, or the fact that Fareeha was going to live regardless. She didn't need to tell him that. "So if you would?" Ana held out her hand expectantly.

Lena watched in awe as the front desk attendant's eyes widened to an impossible degree. Shaky hands reached below in search of something, pulling out a shining key dangling on a string. *Scary.*

"I'm sorry for the misunderstanding Miss Amari." He handed her the key. "Room 410."

A smile. "Thank you so much young man." Ana took the key and grabbed the drawing, stuffing them both into her pocket. "Let's go Lena."

Lena came rushing after Ana, keeping the pace when Ana showed no signs of slowing down as they ascended the stairwell. She nearly ran into the older woman when Ana suddenly stopped in front of a door. "We're at the fourth floor already?"

A silencing gesture. "We need to keep quiet," whispered Ana.

"Got it."

The door to the fourth floor was opened quietly, Lena didn't even hear it squeak or moan, the rust on the hinges indicating that it should have made even just a little peep. *Scary.*

Lena couldn't even hear Ana's footsteps as they walked down the hall. She found herself having to lift her feet to keep her shoes from squeaking on the floor. Her heart pounded when the number '410' stood in front of them on the closed door. *I have no idea what Ana's going to do.* It felt like her brain short-circuited when Ana silently inserted the key, turning the lock, and finally opened the door.

Ana quickly burst into the room, a keen eye actively looking for Amélie as she searched the room. "She's not here." Her reflection in the mirror stared back as she stood in the empty bathroom.

“Let’s take a look around yeah?”

Ana backed out of the bathroom, walking over to the bed to check the side table. Inside was a single piece of crumpled paper. She unwrapped it, smoothing out the paper to read the single sentence written in the middle. ‘*She will be okay.*’

“‘She will be okay’. What’s that mean?” Lena was leaning over Ana’s shoulder, reading the crumpled letter in the woman’s hands.

“Fareeha.”

“Fareeha? I thought Talon’s trying to take everyone out? What do they want with her?”

Ana tucked the letter into her pocket. “That’s what we’re here to find out.”

-

Amélie paused in the middle of the hallway. Her door was open.

The bag of bread she had bought was soundlessly put on the ground, booted feet silently tip-toeing to her room to investigate. Through the narrow opening, Amélie could see two women searching through her room. Their backs were turned to her, both facing the window. A quick flicker to her dresser and she could see her unrolled collection of knives.

Nothing else was important. It took about ten seconds for Amélie to go through with the plan formulating in her mind. Bursting through the door, Amélie made a run straight for her knives, scooping them off the dresser as she passed the two intruders to get to the window. *Those two!* It was Ana and woman that chased after her the night of the engagement. *How did they find me?*

A gloved hand reached out for her, Amélie bent backwards to avoid it. In one swift motion, she used her feet to kick out the window in front of her, crossing her arms in front of her face and wincing as the glass shards cut up her skin. She grabbed the balcony railing and swung over to the balcony beneath hers, giving that window the same treatment.

She didn’t stop to look back. Amélie had to find her partner, they needed to leave.

-

Hana contemplated her next move. For the past hour she was teaching Angela how to play her favorite card game. The woman seemed to catch on pretty quickly and Hana found that she had to think carefully about her plays.

Thoughts of last night came flashing through her mind. Hana put down her cards, a glossy look appearing in her eyes.

“Something wrong Hana?” Angela rested her cards on the table when she saw the sudden change in Hana’s expression.

“It’s just...” The unshed tears started to cloud her vision. “I’m sorry about last night.” Hana used her sleeve to wipe away the tears.

Angela got out of her chair, rushing to Hana’s side. She enveloped the girl in her arms, holding her close. “There’s nothing to be sorry about.” She ran a soothing hand along Hana’s back when she started to shake.

“It’s just...” She started to suck in air. The tears got all over Angela’s shirt. “It’s just that

sometimes I think too m-much.” Another sob. Hana lifted her arms to hold Angela tight.

Angela just listened. She was afraid that the girl would cry even harder if she tried to console her now.

“I-I just couldn’t help but think about how someone is t-trying to hurt my family.” Hana tried to catch her breath, the air in her lungs shuddering. “And then I just see all the blood on the ground. How my parents w-were just lying there.”

A deep ache coursed through Angela’s heart. She remembered her mother’s hand sticking out from under the collapsed ceiling, blood staining her pants when she dropped down to her knees to try and push everything away. How she had to stop when she saw-

She blinked away the tears, focusing on staying here with Hana, to try and help the girl that was hurting.

“I don’t want to lose my family again.”

“You won’t.” Angela brought her arm beneath Hana’s knees, lifting the sobbing girl into her arms. She walked inside, the abandoned card game left for another time. “You won’t lose any of us.”

-

“They found me.” Amélie had burst into Hanzo’s room, using the spare room key to get in quickly. She didn’t have to check to see if he was inside. He wasn’t one to go wandering around.

Hanzo stood from where he sat at the edge of the bed. He stuffed a piece of paper back into his pockets, walking over to the dresser to grab a shirt. “Who found you?”

“Ana.”

A pause. Pulling the rest of the shirt down, he headed straight for his bow. “Just go now. I’ll keep them busy.”

Amélie hesitated a moment, unsure of what he was planning. One look at his stoic mask and she understood that she could trust him. “Meet me at the bakery.” She didn’t wait for a response, dashing out into the hallways again and running for the stairwell.

On her way out, she passed by a rather frazzled looking attendant, paying him no mind as she ran into the busy crowd of people outside.

She kept a quick pace, eyes roaming the store fronts in search of something. A store to her right caught her attention, breaking away from the crowd to slink inside. It was a clothing store. She would rather take her time in picking an outfit but the current situation called for a rushed job. So Amélie found the first dress that was in her size and had long sleeves. The cuts on her arms would have been a dead giveaway. Picking up a matching pair of shoes and grabbing a sun hat, she made her way to the back rooms.

Staring at herself in the mirror, it wasn’t half bad. She pulled her hair down and ran her fingers through to smooth it out. *This should be enough.* After putting the sun hat on, she stepped out of the dressing room, her old clothes and boots hanging off one arm, cash and tags in hand. Amélie didn’t even look back after gracefully leaving the payment on the checkout counter, slinking back into the street crowd with ease.

A quick look to the hotel and the crowd around her, Amélie was certain that nobody had followed

her. *He better not do something reckless.* She made the short walk down the street, stopping at their car and unlocking the door. *I'd rather not have to be assigned another partner.* The outfit she held in her arm was dumped in the back seat. Amélie sat down and turned on the car. She gripped the steering wheel, taking a deep breath. "Everything's fine." Driving down the street, the phrase became a mantra in her head.

-

Fareeha stood with her arms crossed, the information from this meeting was troubling to say the least.

"There are reports of troops marching along the neutral roads."

"Another assassination. Greece."

"One of our squads hasn't report back. No one's heard from them."

"We have requests from both Belgium and Nepal asking for protection."

Fareeha took a deep breath. All this was too much for the resources they had. "Any word from our allies?"

Her ambassador spoke up. "They want to hold a summit."

Fareeha frowned. *Always with the politics.* "We'll have one here." She saw the question ready to spill out of her ambassador's mouth. "As soon as possible."

She pinched the bridge of her nose, trying to concentrate. "Send word to Reinhardt, see if he can check out the neutral roads in his area. We'll send protection units to Belgium and Nepal."

Fareeha took a deep breath, leaning over the map splayed on the table in front of her. "I want a retrieval squad sent for our missing soldiers."

Some of her advisors were against the idea of the retrieval squad.

"We don't know if they're alive."

"We'd be sending them to die."

Fareeha curled her fist, trying to contain her anger. "Even if all we're doing is retrieving bodies, we're not leaving them behind. I want them sent. Now." One of her advisors quickly nodded his head, walking out of the room with orders to give. She stared down at the map when the room got silent. "We'll resume this after lunch."

-

After jumping down the balcony after Amélie, Lena couldn't find the woman on the third floor. In her continued search, she nearly ran into Ana in the hallway of the second floor. "That was definitely her."

Ana nodded, "She's probably making her way out, let's go through the back."

They made a run for the back stairs, quickly opening the door to the stairwell. Lena was first to step through, stopping short when an arrow whizzed by her face. She followed the arrow's path with her eyes, her heart pounding when she locked eyes with the man with his bow drawn. Her attention was drawn back to Ana when the older woman stopped right beside her, a surprised expression on her face.

“Hanzo?” Dark eyes narrowed at Ana. “You’re working with that woman? For Talon? Wasn’t once enough?”

“This isn’t about what my father wanted.” Hanzo’s fingers twitched on the bow. “I couldn’t care less what Talon wants.”

“Then why?” Ana took a small step forward, freezing in place when Hanzo pulled the bowstring back. “With everything that happened with Genji and-”

Another arrow released, Ana ducking out of the way before she became a skewer. “You do not get to say his name.” His scream reverberated through the stairwell.

Lena grimaced at the echoed rage, watching Ana flinch from the corner of her eye. *What is going on?*

Hanzo took a huff of air, slowly pulling out another arrow, “They told me that you were still alive. That’s why.”

“Hanzo.” One more tentative step. “It wasn’t-”

Another loose arrow, Ana reached up to put pressure on the deep cut embedded in her upper arm. “You’re lucky.” He reluctantly lowered the bow, strapping it to his back. “I can’t kill you yet.” A quick kick behind him and the door burst open. Hanzo made a run for it.

“Uh, should I...?” Lena looked over at Ana with the lingering question of whether or not to give chase.

“Just go. I’ll be fine.”

At Ana’s insistence, Lena ran after Hanzo. He had a good head start running down the alley between the buildings. *Well that won’t do.* Two blinks with her accelerator and he was almost within arm’s reach. Hanzo suddenly stopped and ducked just as she went to blink again. *Out of blinks.* She could only watch as Hanzo scaled the building next to them, disappearing onto the rooftop.

“Well, never was good at climbing.” Lena stopped to catch her breath some more before running back to the hotel. She found Ana kneeling on the ground, wrapping her arm up. The bandage was already soaked through with blood. “He got away.”

A curled-up fist hit the wall. “Damnit.” Ana looked away, disappointment sketched across her face.

“Hey, we should get you stitched up.” Lena pointed to the bandages that were more red than white. “That’s not doing much.”

A tired sigh. “Yeah.”

-

The fresh smells from the bakery instantly calmed Fareeha down. She made her way to the counter, her stomach growling loudly now that she was surrounded by such a wonderful aroma.

“Same as usual?” The friendly employee gave Fareeha a knowing smile.

“Am I that predictable Aliyah?”

Aliyah widened her smile. "You come here three times a week ordering the same old same old."

"If you're going to put it that way, how about you surprise me this time?" Fareeha couldn't help but chuckle at the girl's excitement.

"I won't let you down." The girl was bouncing on the balls of her feet. "You're gonna love this."

"Well how much does it cost to eat something I'm going to love?"

"Um..." Some quick addition. "About the same."

Fareeha pulled out some money, sliding it across the counter. "Here's a little extra." She pointed behind her. "I'll just be sitting at one of the outside tables."

A nod. "I'll bring it out when it's ready."

Fareeha smiled. She walked back outside and took a seat nearest the door. There was a breeze today and the shade from the store front kept the sun away. Fareeha closed her eyes, tilting her head back to enjoy the nice moment.

"Do you mind if I sit here?"

Fareeha opened her eyes, focusing her gaze on the woman taking the seat right across from her.

She was tall, the heels she wore accentuating her height. Her long hair blew softly in the wind. The woman carefully smoothed her dress down before taking a seat. A single cup of coffee was placed in front of the woman. Intense brown eyes roved over Fareeha's face taking in every detail.

"Seeing as you're already sitting, please stay."

The other woman just smiled, taking a sip from her coffee. "You look stressed." A warm crinkle in her eyes.

"There's a lot going on." Fareeha paused, looking away from the intense eyes for a moment. "I just want to keep everyone safe."

"So admirable." Another sip. "You're mother was known for her brilliance but you..." She reached out and brushed fingertips along Fareeha's hand. "You are known for your compassion." A genuine smile, teeth glinting in the light.

"Ah thank you." A shock to the system. Fareeha quickly moved her hands to her lap, uncomfortable with the prolonged touch. "Tell me, have we met somewhere? You seem to know my name but I can't recall yours."

She took another sip of her coffee, slowly putting the emptied cup down. "Emily."

Fareeha scoured her brain for someone named Emily, stopping short when a sandwich and tea were placed in front of her. "Ah, thank you."

Aliyah tucked the tray under her arm. "No, thank you. That was a nice tip." She went to go back inside before quickly turning back around again. "I almost forgot! Congratulations on your engagement! What was the lucky lady's name again?"

Fareeha couldn't help the upturn of her lips at the thought of her fiancée. "Angela." At the mention of the doctor's name, Fareeha could have sworn she saw Emily frown. She blinked, looking at the woman again to find a small smile instead.

“That’s right! I remember now. Really, I don’t know how I could have forgotten.” Aliyah made a show of getting down on one knee, holding out the tray in front of her. In her best Fareeha impression she said, “Angela, with the city as my witness, will you marry me?” She laughed when Fareeha nearly spit out her tea. She got up on both feet, tucking the tray under her arm again. “Relax, I was in tears by the time you said that. It really was a beautiful ceremony.”

Fareeha watched as Emily started a slow tapping of her fingers, her hand shook slightly. “I’m glad you were able to watch the ceremony.”

Aliyah smirked. “Had to push my way through some, well a lot, of people. I wasn’t going to miss it for the world.” Her eyes landed on the empty cup of the woman sitting with Fareeha. “Would you like another coffee miss?”

Her fingers stopped tapping the table. “No.” Intense eyes left Fareeha’s, settling for eyeing the girl instead.

“Oh, um...” Aliyah felt like those eyes were piercing through her. She looked back at Fareeha, already feeling uncomfortable. “I hope you enjoy the meal.” She quickly walked back inside, grateful that the woman wasn’t looking at her anymore.

Fareeha locked eyes with Emily again, watching as she seemed to be thinking about something. The other woman’s gaze glanced behind Fareeha, a look of disappointment shining through before being replaced with a forced smile.

“I should leave you to your meal. Thank you for sitting with me.” She gracefully stood up, extended a hand to gently touch Fareeha’s hand again. With her dress swaying in the wind, her other hand holding onto the sun hat to keep it from blowing away as the wind picked up, Emily gave Fareeha one last genuine smile before making her way down the street.

Fareeha shook out her hand, trying to hold down the unsettling feeling that wormed its way through her body. *I hope I don’t run into her again.*

-

As soon as Fareeha stepped out the car, she was ambushed by Hana and Angela. The two of them took an arm, welcoming her home with enthusiasm. Fareeha smiled at the welcoming sight. It was good to be home.

“Just the two I wanted to see.”

Hana started pulling them along, starting them into a slow walk. “Mama, we were just going to go play a game but then we saw you coming home. Now all three of us can play right?”

“Of course. I just need to get changed first.” She was suddenly pulled along faster.

“Then hurry up.”

They got through the front door in record time, Angela letting go of Fareeha’s other arm when they walked through the sitting room.

“I’ll just wait here,” said Angela.

Fareeha paused, a question in her eyes.

Angela gave a knowing look, a smirk forming on her face when Fareeha started to turn red at the implication.

“Come on mama, you’re taking too long.” Hana tugged at Fareeha’s arm.

“Y-yeah, sorry.” She hurriedly along with Hana to her room.

Once inside the room, Hana jumped on her mother’s bed, rolling over so she was face down on the bed. “Don’t take too long.” She mumbled through the sheets.

Fareeha couldn’t help but laugh. She shook her head at the sight and walked over to her wardrobe. Quickly taking off her work clothes, she pulled a sleeveless shirt over her head and yanked on a pair of shorts. She pulled on some more appropriate shoes and walked over to the bed. Hana was still face down on the sheets, her legs occasionally thumping on the mattress.

“Hey.” Fareeha reached out to touch Hana’s shoulder. “How are you doing?”

Hana moved her head so she was facing Fareeha. “I’m okay.”

A nod. “If you need to stay another night with us, just come knocking okay? We’ll always be there for you.”

Hana rolled over to her back, staring up at the canopy. “Okay.”

A moment of silence.

“So what game did you want to play?” Fareeha smiled at the look of excitement on Hana’s face. The girl had immediately sat up, already pulling Fareeha off the bed with her.

“We’re going to play hide and seek.” She reached the door, hurriedly opening it and pulling Fareeha along the hallway. “No hiding inside though, that’s cheating.”

“Got it, anything else?”

“Base is at the front door.”

They got to the sitting room where Angela was waiting. She had a radiant smile. “You’re back.”

Hana quick grabbed Angela’s hand, pulling her along with Fareeha. “No time to waste. We going to start soon. I’ll seek first to make things faster.” She shoved the two of them out the door and closed it behind her. “I’m going to count to fifty.” Hana turned around. “1...2...3...4...”

With wide eyes Angela and Fareeha ran off to find a hiding spot.

After about 30 seconds, Fareeha found herself a nice spot behind a bush in the gardens. She was on her knees hunched over, eyes looking through the bush to keep watch. The nearby rustling caught her attention. From behind, Angela came crawling through to her.

“Find your own hiding spot,” Fareeha hissed out. She wasn’t afraid to admit to her competitive nature. Losing at hide and seek because Angela gave away her position didn’t sit well with her. Fiancée or not.

Angela just pouted, getting closer until they were shoulder to shoulder. “My hiding spot is wherever you are.”

“But I don’t want to lose...”

“Would it be so bad if you did?”

Yes. “No...”

“Hmm.” Angela sat down, cupping Fareeha’s cheeks with her palms. “You don’t look like you’re telling the truth.” She started rubbing her thumb along the smooth skin. “Maybe you just need some convincing?”

A thump of her heart. “What do you have in mind?”

“Oh just a little...” Angela leaned in, softly pressing her lips to Fareeha’s. “something.”

“I think I need a little more convincing.”

“Oh?” Angela maneuvered so she was on her back. “Come here then.” She patted her lap.

Fareeha climbed on top of Angela, straddling her hips. Angela didn’t waste any time in pulling her down, resuming where they left off by deepening the kiss. Cool fingers found their way to the edge of Fareeha’s shirt, inching their way up a muscled abdomen. She gasped when Fareeha grabbed her hand, pushing it up further.

Angela broke the kiss, panting when Fareeha moved onto her neck. “Still need a little more convincing?” She ran her other hand through Fareeha’s hair, pulling her closer still. Angela was in her own little slice of heaven. The comfortable weight of Fareeha on top of her coupled with the gentle pulling of soft skin with one hand as she ran her other through smooth tresses. And that *mouth* working its way down her neck. If it wasn’t for the fact that they were hiding in the bushes because they were playing a game...

Blue eyes shot open. They were very much still playing hide and seek with Hana. The thought of the girl finding them in this position had Angela’s heart nearly bursting through her chest with every thump. “Fareeha.”

“Hmm?”

“We need to stop.”

“Wha?” Fareeha sat up, a confused look on her face.

“Hana could find us at any moment.”

Fareeha’s eyes looked like they were about to burst. She quickly scrambled off Angela, darting to the bush to look out for Hana. “And speak of the...”

It was like the girl had a homing beacon on the pair. She was headed straight for them. “You know, that bush doesn’t really hide you two.” She started off in a run towards them.

Angela tried to get up first, tripping over Fareeha’s legs in the process. Fareeha tried to crawl out from underneath Angela, her endeavor proving fruitless when she found that their legs were tangled. Together they formed a small pile of shame.

“You two didn’t even try hiding in different spots.”

Fareeha raised a finger to interject. “I’ll have you know that I *was* taking this game very seriously until this one,” she pointed at Angela, “came to seduce me into losing.”

Angela gasped at the accusation. “Seduce you? I remember it clearly the other way around.”

Fareeha seemed affronted. “I would never.”

“Oh but you did.” Angela put a hand up to her forehead feigning a swooning motion. “You had me in your seductive clutches. I was powerless to stop it.” A dramatic wink.

Hana wrinkled her nose at their banter, those two were milking it. “Well, whatever happened,” she bent down and tapped them each on the forehead, “you both lost.”

“Okay okay, we lost and we didn’t really try.” Fareeha managed to untangle their legs, helping Angela up as she stood. “How about, to make up for it, we go out to eat?”

Hana smiled, frowning a bit immediately afterwards. “What about nana and Lena? They’re not home yet.” She kicked her foot a little. “I don’t want to eat without them.”

“We’ll get them something to eat while we’re there.”

Hana considered the offer, nodding along after thinking it over.

“I’ll just run inside real quick to grab the keys, I’ll meet you two at the car.”

-

They sat at a table outside, the sunset in the distance nearly consumed by the night sky. Fareeha was on one side of the table, head resting on her palm, looking at Angela and Hana on the other side. Angela and Hana were hunched over a menu, the young girl walking Angela through the unfamiliar alphabet.

And Fareeha couldn’t help it, the lazy smile that covered her face. The occasional spike in the steady thumping of her heart. How she kept thinking about the future, the thousands of days they could spend together.

Angela put her menu down, adopting the same posture as Fareeha. “And what’s got you smiling?”

“Just looking at my beautiful family.”

Angela’s hand slipped and she had to grip onto the table to keep herself from falling over. A waiter came by before Fareeha could say anything. From the corner of her eye, she could see Fareeha’s sparkling eyes watching them as Hana taught her how to say her order in their native language, white teeth peeking through Fareeha’s lips when Angela would stumble over a word.

Hana had to snap Fareeha out of the thoughts, the waiter was standing by patiently ready to take Fareeha’s order. She hastily read some things off the menu for Ana, Lena, and herself, giving the waiter instructions to pack up Ana and Lena’s dinner to go.

Fareeha’s cheeks burned in embarrassment at having the waiter just stand there while she was drifting off. Her eyes watched Angela’s hand as it crossed over the table to tangle with her own fingers.

“Don’t be embarrassed. I think it’s cute.” Angela squeezed their hands. “I love everything about you.”

Fareeha felt like her face was on fire, she could have sworn her palms were slick with sweat, Angela too kind to say anything about it. Her heart was going as fast as a rabbit. And again, she shouldn’t get like this. They’ve said, ‘I love you’ thousands upon thousands of times by now. Saying it with words, with a purposeful glance, in every gesture they made, and carving it onto every inch of skin. But there were moments where Fareeha would still get like this, unable to spew a single word from stunned lips.

Hana leaned over to Angela, whispering to the woman beside her. "I think you made it worse."

Angela whispered back. "Maybe we can kiss it better?" She smiled when Hana agreed.

Fareeha blinked when Angela and Hana got up from their seats, Angela leaned against the table, raising their held hands higher to place a gentle kiss on the back of her palm. Hana came around the side and gave her mother a quick kiss on the cheek, laughing when Fareeha finally reacted with a grin.

Hana shrieked when Fareeha wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her back in for an onslaught of kisses all over her face. Angela received much the same treatment, landing in Fareeha's lap and giggling as the other woman littered her cheeks with quick pecks, stopping at her lips for a sweet, lingering kiss.

The waiter came by with their meals and Fareeha finally stopped her onslaught. Their faces hurt from all the smiling and laughing. During the meal, Angela and Fareeha would lean over the table to let each other try their food. They'd scrape extra food onto Hana's plate when the girl would give them those big pleading eyes. Night had firmly set by the time the three of them left the restaurant together, Angela and Hana hanging onto Fareeha's arms, letting the woman in the middle lead them to the car.

-

Relief filled Fareeha when she saw her mother's car parked at home. She pulled in next to it, and turned off the car. "Looks like they made it home." Fareeha looked in the rearview mirror, the image of a sleeping Hana shining through. "I'll wake her up."

Angela reached out a hand, placing it on Fareeha's shoulder. "Don't. I'll get her. Just take the food inside." She squeezed Fareeha's shoulder. "I know with your stitches you can't carry her but," Angela flexed her arm, "I've got some muscles too. I know you want to spoil her while you still can."

Fareeha just smiled, reaching up a hand to place it atop Angela's. "Thank you."

Walking the path to the front door, Fareeha kept in step with Angela, watching as the blonde carried Hana like she would. Once they got inside, Angela started towards Hana's room, telling Fareeha that she'd get her to bed.

Fareeha let out a contented sigh, heading towards the kitchen to put the food down.

And that's where they were. Lena was sitting on the counter watching with a worried expression as Ana was in the middle of pulling down a pot.

"Where were you two? You just left without saying anything." Fareeha had put the food down on the counter, crossing her arms with a serious expression on her face.

Ana put the pot down. "We were in Cairo." She didn't say anymore.

Fareeha stared between the two of them, letting the information sink in. Her mother could be stubborn sometimes. She sighed. "There's food." She pointed to containers beside her. "Hana didn't want to go eat without you two you know."

Lena slowly got down from the counter, eyes downcast towards her shoes. "Ana..."

Ana understood the underlying request. "We..." She looked up into her daughter's eyes. "We'll

talk after dinner. Okay?”

Fareeha uncrossed her arms, somewhat satisfied with the response. “Okay. After dinner.”

## Chapter End Notes

Just in case it didn't click, Emily is Amélie.

I kind of wish I could write fluff forever and ignore that thing called 'plot'

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!